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THE NEWSPAPER FOR CHATHAM, GILLINGHAM, ROCHESTER, STROOD, RAINHAM & DISTRICT



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April 8, 2009



MONEY MATTERS

Pull-out supplement on how to beat the crunch



MORE SCHOOL RUN DRIVERS TARGETED

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TALKING BUSINESS: The Apprentice candidate Mona Lewis at 2020 Vision. Search 'vision'.

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ISSN 1753-119-5



Picture SIMON ROBINSON

ECHO DOWN THE YEARS

Shots echoed across Chatham Historic Dockyard to mark the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the former naval base's trust. The 25-gun salute was executed on three powerful World War Two artillery pieces, watched by hundreds of former dockyard workers.

Housing minister Margaret Beckett was guest of honour at the ceremony and later officially opened the trust's anniversary exhibit, showcasing the preservation, restoration and regeneration work carried out at the dockyard during the last 25 years.

FULL STORY ON PAGE 5

EXCLUSIVE

BY SIMON ROBINSON

A SECOND CCTV car is now targeting motorists across Medway.

The new Smart car was rolled out last Wednesday, enabling roving wardens to issue twice as many tickets as before.

Medway council's first CCTV car – leased at an annual cost of £95,000 – issued more than 9,500 penalty charge notices to illegally-parked drivers in its first year of operation.

Since April last year, the council has raked in more than £200,000. The two-car fleet will visit four schools per day, patrolling "traffic-sensitive areas" between the morning and afternoon peak hours.

In a council report, parking manager Rubena Hafizi writes: "Due to the increasing demand for the CCTV vehicle at schools and the positive impact it has had on the number of incidents against our staff, we have implemented a second vehicle from April 1.

"This enables us to visit four schools per day, maximising our presence and enabling us to respond to the regular requests we receive.

"Income from penalty charge notices is reinvested and ring-fenced into highways, road safety and car parks."

Medway Council figures show 1,491 penalty charge notices have been issued outside Medway schools since April last year. These fines were handed out from just 339 visits – equating to more than four fines per visit.

More than 8,000 penalty charge notices have been issued to drivers where parking is prohibited, such as yellow lines and bus stops.

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2 Discovering the crypt in St Peter's Church, Sandwich; one of the county's best kept secrets to visit. **Search 'crypt'**



3 Members of The Royal Sussex living history regiment at Folkestone's Shorncliffe Barracks. **Search 'history'**

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UNITED FRONT: Determined parents have the support of local politicians over their campaign

Vodafone face legal action to stop mast

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

FRUSTRATED residents are considering launching a legal challenge against Vodafone in a bid to stop the communications giant building a phone mast near a primary school.

The threat of court action was made by campaigner Mike Evans, one of a group of parents outraged that the 3G mast could be erected just 100ft away from St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School in Gillingham.

The determined parents are supported by members of the three main political parties – with all three Liberal Democrat Gillingham North ward councillors, the Labour MP for Gillingham and Rainham Paul Clark and the Conservative-run council voicing their opposition to the mast.

Council chiefs twice rejected Vodafone's planning application, but were overruled by the Planning Inspectorate earlier this year. Work began on installing the mast last week.

Mr Evans said Vodafone's motivation for pushing the application through was solely for the site's proximity to Gillingham train station – enabling the firm to offer wireless network coverage for commuters.

Speaking at the phone mast site in Railway Street on Sunday, the frustrated father said: "Vodafone has said the mast is being put up for Gillingham residents and the neighbouring business park.

"The mast will cost £250,000 and yet will only give coverage to a relatively small area, in the region of 15

streets. What's more, Vodafone's own website says there is fantastic coverage in Gillingham – some of the parents here today are with Vodafone and can access perfect 3G coverage.

"We think young children's lives are being put at risk not for the benefit of Gillingham residents, but so that commuters on the train are able to access their Blackberrys and laptops.

"I'm no scientist, but what I do know is that Vodafone and other mobile phone companies say there are gaps in the knowledge about radiation from phone masts.

"The Government advocates a policy whereby firms should think twice before erecting masts near schools.

"Phone masts may well be safe, but we don't know that. And while there's any doubt about it we say don't put masts near schools.

"That's why we're considering a legal challenge."

Paul Clark MP added: "I was approached by these parents and I was happy to take up the case. I know that a lot of people still feel worried about mobile phone masts and they want to see conclusive evidence they are safe. As long as the parents, the schools, and the children are concerned, I am concerned. I'll support them all the way."

A Vodafone spokesman said the mast was needed to improve coverage in Gillingham, saying: "We are aware of coverage gaps in the area and would like to improve the service to our customers."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

30-year-old dies after being struck by bus

A MAN died after being hit by a bus in Rochester on Friday night.

Martin Barlow, 30, was struck by a single-decker 145 Arriva bus near his home in Catherine Street shortly after 9pm.

A Medway man – who has not been named by police – was arrested in connection with the incident.

It has not been confirmed if this man was the driver of the bus. He has been released on bail until June.

A police spokesman said the investigation into the circumstances of the Mr Barlow's death was on-going.

MP's website is hit by abusive online attack

A HACKER broke into MP Paul Clark's official website on Monday morning to post an offensive comment.

The unknown online attacker wrote "p*** off" on the Gillingham and Rainham Labour MP's homepage after navigating their way past the site's security measures.

It is thought they also targeted other Labour ministers' websites.

A comment posted by Mr Clark's press officer Tom Davis said: "Apologies to anyone who took offence at being told to f-off when they arrived at the website.

"It's not the campaign slogan we'll be going for next time."

Sponge ball truce to ease locals' concerns

FOOTBALL-mad teenagers have agreed to use sponge balls when playing out in the streets – just one of the compromises reached at a police-led community meeting.

The 14 to 15 year olds said they would not use leather footballs on the Macklands estate, Rainham, and will also finish playing at 9pm after a string of residents' complaints about damage to car and late night noise.

Money has also been found to build a temporary hut at Rainham recreation ground. The hut will give youngsters shelter until extra funds are available to re-develop the pavilion.

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EXQUISITE JEWELLERY

Yobs accused of attack arrested in dawn raids

Police targeted 17 youngsters

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

ELEVEN teenagers were arrested in connection with a savage assault on a father and son.

The yobs – aged between 15 and 18 – were rounded up in a series of raids across Strood and Rochester on Monday.

A total of 17 youths, all known to the police, were targeted by detectives but only 11 were home at the time. They were quizzed in custody.

All 11 were released on bail yesterday for further investigation but will have to obey conditions including a curfew from 8pm to 6am.

The arrests were linked to an assault on a 50-year-old man and his 19-year-old son at their home in Church Green, Strood.

The father was attacked after asking a group of up to 17 teenagers to move away from his property between 8.30pm and 9.15pm.

One of the yobs hit the man on the side of his face, sending him sprawling to the ground.

He was then set upon by more than a dozen teens, who kicked him repeatedly in the head.

His son rushed to his aid and was also attacked. Both men were left bloodied on the ground.

They were taken to Medway Maritime Hospital



Picture: SIMON ROBINSON

WAKE UP CALL: Police officers on Monday morning at the home of a suspect linked to the attack on a father and son

where they were treated for cuts and bruises.

Detective Sergeant Dan Smith, the investigating officer, said: "This was an unprovoked and isolated incident, and fortunately the victim did not suffer serious injuries."

"We wanted to make some early morning arrests of people we would like to speak to in connection with this incident."

"Making these arrests on the first day of the

Easter holidays also sends out a clear message that behaviour of this kind will not be tolerated.

"An early morning call from Kent Police would not be what these teenagers or their families would have expected."

Superintendent Des Keers added: "Kent Police in Medway will not hesitate in taking appropriate action against those who are seen to break the law and act in an anti-social manner."

Trust cited over cleaning problem

A HOSPITAL trust has sought to reassure patients after its cleaning standards were flagged up in the first report by the new 'super watchdog'.

Medway NHS Foundation Trust was among 21 organisations in the country found not to be meeting Government regulations for managing the spread of infection, according to the Care Quality Commission's assessment.

The trust has defended its results and said staff morale had been dented after the bad publicity following the CQC's report on Friday.

Linda Dempster, head of infection control and prevention, said: "Medway is safe, clean and has very good infection rates."

The trust has been told it must meet the national cleaning standards in high-risk areas throughout the trust by May 31.

Infection control and hygiene became a major concern nationally after 90 patients died in two outbreaks of the superbug C diff at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust between 2004-06.

Declaration

In a damning report on the deaths from the health watchdog in 2007, infection control and hygiene, and poor leadership, were blamed for the trust's failures.

The CQC, launched last week, has a range of new powers and was formed by a merger of the Healthcare Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Mental Health Act Commission.

Health bosses were warned trusts face tough measures if they fail to meet standards, including fines and closure of services.

Mrs Dempster said: "I think it is important people know it was our own declaration. At the time we had some work going on to change the way our housekeeping team is trained, which will be completed by the end of April. It is not saying we are not already clean, it is saying that we want to improve things further."

Major's ride for charity is Bright-on

RETIRED Army Major Robin Alexander is gearing up for a mammoth three-day charity bike ride.

Major Alexander, who served for 28 years in the Corps of Royal Engineers and 15 more as a Retired Officer at the Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME), will get into the saddle on April 14.

The Looking on the Bright-on Side riding challenge sees the Major set off from the RSME in Chatham, heading to Brighton, via London, and back.

Supporting

All proceeds of the trek will go towards the Help for Heroes campaign, which supports servicemen wounded in action.

Major Alexander said: "I have seen first-hand the physical and psychological damage that can be done during times of conflict."

"That trauma does not simply end when a soldier returns home."

"Help for Heroes is doing a tremendous job of supporting our returning soldiers and their families through those difficult times."

Major Alexander has already completed three charity bike rides, raising more than £40,000 for other charities.

Waterfront vision comes closer to reality as council agree to new homes build

PLANS to transform the Temple Waterfront site into a major mixed-use community have been submitted to Medway Council.

The detailed proposal – lodged yesterday – would see 620 homes built on the 28-hectare brownfield site along with shops, retail outlets and businesses.

The Strood site's half-mile waterfront, which overlooks Rochester castle and cathedral, will be adorned with public walkways and open spaces while wildlife habitats will be protected and enhanced.

Morgan Timber, co-owners of the land with Medway Council and Lafarge Cement UK, will remain on site in improved premises.

Work on the site is expected to be carried out swiftly after Lafarge and Medway Council bosses signed a Planning Performance Agreement, a new system designed to simplify and speed up large-scale development proposals.

Lafarge's land and planning director David Simms said: "Today's submission of our planning application, together with the signing of the planning performance agreement, is a huge step forward."



VISION: Impression of Temple Waterfront

"Temple Waterfront, with its links to the M2 and superb views across the river to Rochester castle and cathedral, is one of our most important sites. It has massive potential and we're determined to see that potential realised."

Medway Council leader Rodney Chambers added: "This application is another milestone for our 20-year regeneration programme."

"Our ambition is to transform Medway into a successful riverside city through the redevelopment of town centre and waterfront sites along seven miles of the river."

A period of public consultation will be carried out and various planning committees will discuss the proposals before anything is rubber-stamped.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Have your say on plans for the area's economy

BUSINESSES and residents are invited to have their say on Medway Council's three-year economic plan.

The Economic Development Strategy 2009 to 2012 aims to address key business issues, build on successes and create a prosperous economy for the future.

Economic growth boss Jane Chitty said: "One of our main priorities is to ensure that everyone in Medway benefits from Medway's economy."

Easter surprises in store at Outlet Centre

BUNNIES, chicks and lambs will be among the barnyard animals grazing on the Dockside Outlet Centre farm this Easter.

The farmyard will be set up at the Chatham Maritime shopping centre on Saturday April 11 and on Easter Monday.

The Easter activities also include an exciting egg hunt, with free packets of mini eggs being given away while stocks last.

Twickers abseil a great try for stroke charity

BRAVE brother and sister Nicola and Anthony Vaughan helped raise more than £100,000 for charity when they abseiled down Twickenham Stadium.

The siblings, from Gillingham, were two of 700 daredevils to complete the 100ft descent at England's national rugby stadium on Sunday March 29, raising money for the Stroke Association.

The charity abseil day raised more than £107,000.

Visit egg-citing fayre at Hempstead Valley

AN EASTER gift fayre is being held at Hempstead Valley this week giving shoppers the chance to pick up a range of goods and delicacies.

A shopping centre spokesman said: "The malls will be filled with stalls selling a wide range of Easter gifts, from chocolates from Medway-based Relish Chocolates, decorated goose eggs, to bespoke jewellery and handmade soaps, you'll find a great selection of inspiring gifts for Easter."

The free fayre runs until Saturday.

'Viagra' rapist jailed for evil attacks on teen girls

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

A FORMER Army Cadet member who took Viagra to carry out a string of "horrific" sexual attacks on two young girls has been jailed for 15 years.

Paedophile David Ransley, 60, who is believed to have links with the Kent Army Cadet Force in Gillingham, was found guilty of ten counts of sexual offences including rape, sexual assault of a child and causing a child to engage in sexual activity.

Ransley, of Newington, near Sittingbourne, was told he must serve at least half of the jail term before he is eligible for release.

In sentencing at Maidstone Crown Court last Wednesday, Judge Martin Joy said Ransley had shown significant planning to commit these offences, even obtaining a prescription of Viagra so that he would have the necessary potency to have sex with his victims.

He also said that Ransley showed "no victim empathy at all" and that he used "significant interpersonal skills to gain the trust of these victims and then abused that trust".

Judge Joy went on to say that "he had no doubt that the degree of harm Ransley had done

to his victims will last for a very long time".

The successful prosecution came as a result of a year-long investigation by child protection officers from Kent Police based in the Mid Kent Public Protection Unit at Sittingbourne Police Station.

Detective Constable John Milham, who led the investigation, said: "Ransley was a dangerous predator who cynically abused the trust shown to him by the victims and their families, for his own sexual gratification."

"The success of this investigation would not have been possible without the sheer bravery of the victims and they should be commended for their courage in coming forward to report these crimes."

"Every child matters and those who decide to abuse children will be pursued by police, no matter how long ago those crimes were committed."

On release from prison Ransley will have to sign the Sex Offenders Register for life and will not be allowed to work with children either in a paid or voluntary position.

He will also be subject to a Sexual Offences



PREDATOR: Former Army Cadet member David Ransley

Prevention Order for an indefinite period.

After the sentencing a spokesman for the Army Cadet Force said: "David Ransley is a former adult member of Kent Army Cadet force."

He refused to comment further on his role within the cadet force.

Waste of a good garden punished



A CHATHAM man has been fined £250 after turning his garden into a tip.

Bhupinder Singh, 52, of Natal Road, was hauled before Medway Magistrates Court after ignoring repeated requests to clear his land of rubbish.

The court heard Singh's unfenced garden was full of decaying waste – including a rotting bath, old tyres, a rusty fridge and an old armchair.

Medway Council enforcement team spent more than a year unsuccessfully trying to persuade Singh to clear the garden.

But when it became clear that Singh was not going to take any action, he was served with a notice under section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The notice required Singh to clear his garden of rubbish and dispose of it at a registered waste disposal site.

Yet again he ignored the council's pleas – forcing the matter to be settled in court.

Magistrates handed Singh a £250 fine and ordered him to pay £120 in costs and a £15 victim surcharge.

Community safety and enforcement chief Rehman Chishti said: "Untidy land has a detrimental effect on the quality of life for residents in Medway."

"As well as being an eyesore, it can attract further fly-tipping and lead to feelings of insecurity for residents and visitors to the area."

"This case sends a strong message to those who think we will not take action against them."

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GUEST: Housing and Planning Minister Margaret Beckett was given tour of Chatham Historic Dockyard's new exhibition

Crowds and guns salute dockyard's 25th anniversary

CHATHAM Historic Dockyard Trust marked its anniversary in style with a 25-gun salute – one shot for each year's service since its inception in 1984.

The celebratory salute was carried out on three World War Two guns and watched by hundreds of former dockyard workers and invited guests, including Housing and Planning Minister Margaret Beckett MP.

Attention then turned to the former naval base's No 3 Covered Slip for the official launch of a new exhibit detailing the work of the Trust during the past 25 years.

The exhibition uses photographs from the Trust's collections to illustrate how the derelict former military industrial site has been transformed into a thriving mixed use community.

It now has 112 homes, 100 small businesses and welcomes around 150,000 visitors per year to its maritime heritage attractions.

Visitors and guests were treated to birthday

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

cake and a celebratory glass of champagne.

Chatham Dockyard Historical Society chairman Brian Jenkins said he was delighted to see the dockyard thriving once more.

He said: "I was one of the team that disposed of the last items at the dockyard when it shut down – I was here until the last.

"I've always thought we need to see the dockyard being occupied and being used as it is today.

"It's great to see all these people in the dockyard again, there are quite a few ex-workers here.

"What we need to see in the future is more money being invested into the dockyard but I'm aware that finances are very tight."

CDHS secretary Clive Stanley added: "For me it's a bittersweet day. It's bitter as it's sad that a place with such naval history had to close but it's also sweet to see how the dockyard has been restored, being used and celebrated."

Ms Beckett said: "It is a privilege to have been invited to help celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

"These stunning converted dockyard buildings are a tribute to those who worked on them. They demonstrate what regeneration is all about – simultaneously preserving a proud part of our naval heritage while using it to build for the future.

"I look forward to another 25 years of achievement."

Medway Council leader Rodney Chambers said: "The closure of the Royal Naval Dockyard in 1984 brought about the loss of thousands of jobs and the pay-packets that went with it.

"However, this area is tough, resilient and resourceful and it is because of this that Medway has managed to move on from this period.

"I am proud of the developments in all areas of the former naval dockyard and there's more to look forward to as Medway continues to be redeveloped as part of the Thames Gateway regeneration programme."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Youngsters dive in for free

TEENAGERS have made the most of a free swimming scheme, with numbers rocketing by 150 per cent.

The healthy living drive – backed by £140 million of government cash – allows anyone aged under 16 and over 60 the chance to swim for free.

Medway MPs Jonathan Shaw and Paul Clark have backed the scheme, on offer at council-owned pools across the towns.

Mr Shaw, who represents Chatham and Aylesford, said: "As a result of NHS funding, pools in Medway have been able to offer the free swimming initiative since January.

"The swimming scheme has been great. I am told that there has been 150 per cent increase in under 16s and a 40 per cent in over 60s taking up swimming activities.

"Swimming is a great form of exercise and the benefits to our health are numerous."

Paul Clark MP added: "Twenty million people under 16 or over 60 are entitled to free swimming thanks to the Government's investment in the programme."

Pylon removal set to begin

MORE than a mile of overhead power lines are being taken down to further improve two beauty spots.

Engineers are undertaking the work at Cobham Park near Rochester and at White Horse Wood Country Park near Maidstone, replacing the lines with underground cables.

EDF Energy Networks is spending £180,000 on the project thanks to a grant from the industry regulator Ofgem.

Nigel Collier, protected areas project officer for EDF, said: "We are delighted to be providing the technical expertise behind these two projects. The removal of the lines will improve the views in and around both parks."

Abi to take pole position

GLAMOUR girl Abi Titmuss will come to Medway later this month to star in a pole-dancing play.

The celebrity pin-up will play the lead in The Naked Truth at Chatham's Central Theatre on April 24 and 25, which also stars ex-Emmerdale actress Lisa Riley and Trudi Goodwin, best known as Sergeant June Ackland in The Bill.

The play follows five women struggling to conquer the art of pole dancing for a charity event.

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Big guns salute Historic Dockyard's silver anniversary. Search 'guns'

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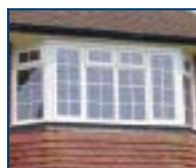
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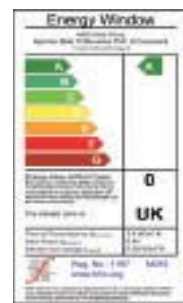
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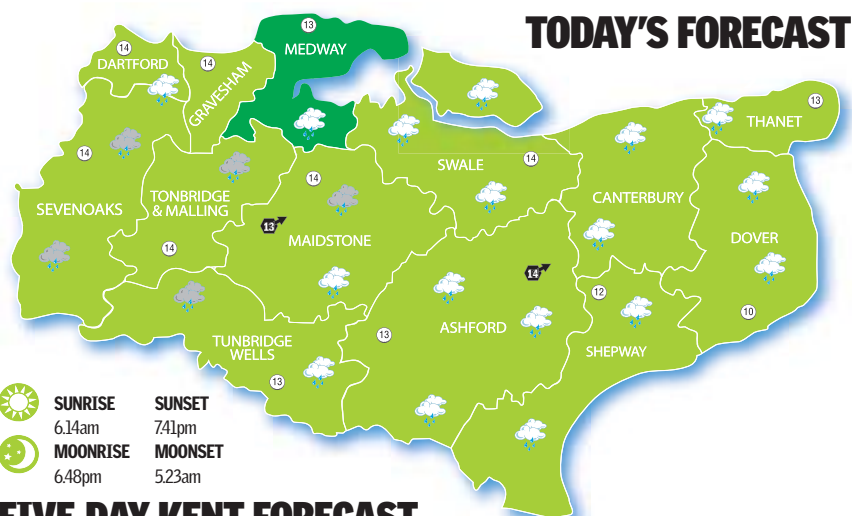
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Chatham	Saturday	2:48pm	6.1m
	Sunday	3:21pm	6.0m
Dover	Saturday	1:03pm	6.5m
	Sunday	1:37pm	6.5m
Dungeness	Saturday	1:02pm	7.7m
	Sunday	1:36pm	7.5m
Ramsgate	Saturday	1:33pm	5.0m
	Sunday	2:07pm	4.9m
Sheerness	Saturday	2:38pm	5.8m
	Sunday	3:11pm	5.7m
Whitstable	Saturday	2:54pm	5.2m
	Sunday	3:25pm	5.1m



AROUND THE WORLD YESTERDAY

Amsterdam	16°C	Madrid	22°C
Athens	11°C	New York	14°C
Barcelona	16°C	Paris	19°C
Beijing	26°C	Rome	17°C
Bombay	36°C	Sydney	19°C
Cape Town	21°C	Tenerife	22°C
Cardiff	11°C	Tokyo	18°C
Gibraltar	17°C	Vancouver	12°C
Hong Kong	19°C	Warsaw	14°C
Las Palmas	22°C	Wellington	18°C

Kent on Saturday proves more news is good news

KENT ON SATURDAY

KOS Media is proud to announce the addition of Kent on Saturday to its award-winning series of newspapers.

Incorporating all the best aspects of our existing Kentish Saturday Observer, this exciting new publication will cover all the biggest news and sports stories of the week and reach more readers than ever before.

At a time when other local newspaper groups are being forced to cut back on staff and resources, the birth of Kent on Saturday demonstrates that KOS Media, the publisher of this paper, is still thriving despite the economic climate.

Managing director Paul Stannard said: "This is another exciting development for us at KOS Media following the launch of our two new YourLocal papers in Deal and Sandwich last month, which demonstrates our commitment to delivering hard-hitting news throughout the county."

Delivery

"Kent on Saturday will sit as an equal to our award-winning Kent on Sunday publication and act as the perfect start to the weekend."

Readers will be able to get their hands on a copy of the free paper from next weekend, with the number of available copies being significantly higher than was offered by the Kentish Saturday Observer.

Kent on Saturday will be available from all good newsagents and retail outlets from this Saturday. Alternatively, you can go green by reading it free on screen at www.kentnews.co.uk.

Meanwhile, KOS Media is running a new promotion to offer free delivery of its weekend papers to selected homes. To find out more visit www.kentnews.co.uk/free.

FIVE-DAY KENT FORECAST

	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon		Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon
Ashford	13°C	13°C	13°C	13°C	12°C	Gravesend	13°C	14°C	13°C	13°C	13°C
Canterbury	12°C	12°C	14°C	12°C	12°C	Maidstone	13°C	13°C	14°C	13°C	13°C
Chatham	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Ramsgate	12°C	12°C	14°C	12°C	12°C
Dartford	13°C	14°C	13°C	13°C	13°C	Rochester	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C
Dover	10°C	11°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Sevenoaks	11°C	12°C	12°C	11°C	11°C
Faversham	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Sittingbourne	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C
Folkestone	10°C	11°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Tonbridge	13°C	13°C	13°C	12°C	12°C
Gillingham	12°C	13°C	12°C	11°C	11°C	Tun Wells	13°C	13°C	13°C	12°C	12°C

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QUESTION & ANSWER

NEIL KEFFORD



Q How did you get into radio?

A I wanted to be in radio from an early age. Aged five or six, can't quite remember, one day off school I was in the kitchen playing at being on the radio.

Two cassette-players, mine and my sister's, I'd turn one tune off, talk to myself and then play another song. Weird thing is, I'm pretty much doing the same thing for a job right now. The only difference, I don't do it in my mum's kitchen any more!

Q When is your show on and how long have you done it?

A My Drive Time show is on weekday afternoons. Starts at 4pm, ends at 7pm. And I love it. I've been doing it three years now. I remember the day I walked in the building for the first time, it was very exciting, and it seems like just last week. Time flies when you're having a bundle of fun.

Q What advice would you offer a potential DJ?

A Depends on which sort of DJ-ing you mean. Nightclub DJ-ing's very different from radio-presenting. Nightclubs, practise for hours on your equipment, it's all in the mix and presenting your music, with minimal speaking.

On the other hand, on the radio it's all about the speaking. Very different. If you want to get

into radio, first make sure you love it, or the idea of doing it, and then be prepared to work for nothing. I did voluntary hospital radio, it's a great place to start, you'll learn a lot and I really recommend it.

Q What is the best thing about presenting a radio show?

A It's a buzz for three whole hours, and you know it is because the time just flies by. There's not a moment you can take your eye off the ball – you have to concentrate and when things work out the way I planned, it's a brilliant feeling. Add to that the great phone-calls and texts I get from listeners, all good stuff.

Q What is the worst?

A When it all goes wrong and listeners look at their radio and think you're a plum. I try to laugh it off, saying that "Yes, I am stupid". I'm not the most technical guy in the world, so sometimes it's a bit of a struggle. Too many buttons, not enough brain!

Q How much planning goes into an average show?

A I plan every show carefully. I know, listening to it, it can be hard to believe! But everything that happens on the radio has to be carefully timed. Time is very important. So knowing what you're going to do and when

you're going to do it is very important, too. I write everything down and the trick then is to make it sound conversational. Sometimes I manage it better than others.

Q Do you look to emulate another DJ's particular style?

A There is one guy who I thought was, and still is, a brilliant communicator. He also has a similar sense of humour to me. It's Simon Mayo. He had a superb breakfast show back in the late 80s and early 90s – it was just the best thing I'd ever heard. It was that that made me realise the job I was doing at that time was not what I really wanted to do. What I really wanted to do was radio, just like Simon Mayo.

Q What are your hobbies and interests?

A Sport, any sport. I don't play anything now, but I love to watch sport. I used to play a lot of rugby. I was OK, as well. So that is my sport of choice, but anything will entertain me.

Q Where in Kent do you live?

A I live in Thanet. I've been in Kent for the three years I've been at Invicta FM. But I've been to Kent a million times, not least, of course, because I married and divorced a Kent girl: Sharon from Margate... you might know her?

Q&A

Invicta FM DJ Neil Kefford talks to **Tom Betts** about his early love of radio from practising in his mum's kitchen, the constant buzz of being on air and what he does when the buttons get the better of him

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2. **Climb the Big Blue Rock!**
in the Yellow Welcome Hall

3. **EASTER PARTIES**
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John Lewis

4. **Easter Activities**
at Carluccio's restaurant

5. **EASTER HUNTS**
at Build-A-Bear Workshop

6. **Family Films**
at Showcase Cinema in the Water Circus

7. **BALLOON MODELLING**
at Ed's Easy Diner

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Good Friday 10am-7pm
*Easter Sunday Closed

Easter Saturday 9am-9pm
Easter Monday 10am-7pm

*The Cinema and selected restaurants and bars will be open on Easter Sunday, check www.bluewater.co.uk for more details.

Visit www.bluewater.co.uk for further details and more ideas for family fun this Easter.

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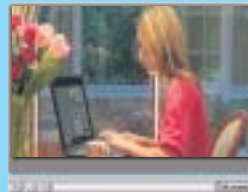
Kent Life has been re-launched as a fun family attraction. Search 'Kent'



Second successful Travel & Leisure Show held in Dover. Search 'travel'



A guide to what's on offer at Gurkha Music Festival. Search 'Gurkha'



See our Go Green - Read It Free On Screen TV commercial. Search 'green'



Police launch Safer Spring campaign to stop nuisance crime. Search 'safer'

EDITOR'S CHOICE

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'Bankers who sparked crisis deserve prison'

LEADING journalist and broadcaster Andrew Neil has lashed out at a business conference at the banks that sparked the economic crisis.

He told delegates at the Kent 2020 Vision business exhibition that he would like to see some bankers go jail – but that would probably happen in the US rather than here.

Mr Neil, a former Sunday Times editor who is now chief of Press Holdings and owner of The Spectator, said the problem was not lack of banking regulation but failure to implement existing rules.

He said: "I do think everyone was complicit in this. The banks are clearly the number one villain, but everyone looked the other way.

"I don't think the banks should be regulated to hell, but I would like to see some of them suffer," he said.

■ BY TONY PATEY

"I would like to see the handcuffs on some of the bankers because I think they have broken the law and I do think they deserve to go to jail.

"I think that will happen in America, although I would hope to think in this country as well – but I do look forward to it happening in the US."

Kent County Council leader Paul Carter told the conference that plans would be unveiled this year aimed at boosting the number of youngsters taking up apprenticeships in Kent.

The proposals should increase the number of apprentices from about 2,000 to 8,000 within a few years.

More than 3,000 business people attended the fourth annual 2020 Vision event at the County Showground, Detling, on Thursday.



ANDREW NEIL: Angered by banks' role in credit crunch

Prepaid cards ready to help animal park

JUST before Christmas the Aspinall Foundation, in conjunction with KOS Media, publisher of this newspaper, offered readers the chance to win a VIP family trip around Port Lympne Wild Animal Park, near Hythe.

The prize includes free entry to the park and a trip in a safari vehicle around the African Experience, a 100-acre site next to the park with breathtaking views of the English Channel.

Entrants were asked to either send in a postal entry with their contact details or take advantage of registering for a free Aspinall prepaid Maestro card.

Registration

Some readers experienced problems with the online registration for the card due to a malfunction, so KOS Media readers are invited to try again and register on www.savinggorillas.com for their free Aspinall Foundation Maestro prepaid card.

It is easy to apply for and no credit check is necessary.

Young people aged between 13 and 17 can also apply, as long as they have their parents' permission.

The card can be used as a debit card but is topped up like a mobile phone and all profits associated with using it are given back to the Foundation.

By using this card, help will be given to support the Foundation's African projects in Congo and Gabon, as well as to the important work carried out in the UK and other parts of the world.

The card is a safe alternative to carrying cash and is accepted worldwide. The account can easily be managed online with instant top-up available.

• The winner of the VIP family trip around Port Lympne is Elizabeth Instone, from Chatham.

World leaders given a taste of Kent's finest

WORLD leaders in London for the G20 summit were served a 'best of British' dinner that included vegetables from the Garden of England.

US president Barack Obama, French president Nicolas Sarkozy and other leaders of the 20 richest countries in the world sat down together for a meal cooked by Jamie Oliver at Downing Street on Wednesday last week.

The party tucked into a starter of organic Scottish salmon served with samphire and sea

kale, with a selection of vegetables from Kent, Surrey and Sussex.

For the main course, slow-roasted shoulder of lamb from a hill farm in Wales was served with Jersey Royal potatoes, wild mushrooms and mint sauce.

Dessert was a classic comfort food of Bakewell tart and custard.

As the leaders debated the benefits of fiscal stimulus, their spouses enjoyed a more relaxed dinner hosted by Sarah Brown with celebrity

guests from the worlds of fashion, sports, business and the arts.

Olympic gold-medallist Dame Kelly Holmes, from Tonbridge, was seated next to Michelle Obama. On the other side of the First Lady was Harry Potter author JK Rowling.

The G20 summit saw the leaders come together at the Excel centre in London's Docklands on Thursday to agree measures to tackle the worst global financial crisis since the 1930s.

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One amazing venue • One great night out

Mulberry Tree's deep local roots

FLIPPING over a menu in a restaurant today is rarely an eye-opening experience.

Maybe it will have the desserts ... or perhaps simply a heavy hint to leave a tip if you believe the service has been up to scratch. Some, simply a splodge of someone else's leftovers. Yet for one restaurant in a pretty village just outside Maidstone, it has turned it into an opportunity to underline its Kentish credentials.

Because at the award-winning Mulberry Tree in Boughton Monchelsea, owners list the suppliers of all the main ingredients.

It is a transparency which has proved a big hit for the restaurant and played a role in it scooping the prestigious restaurant of the year title in the Taste of Kent awards at Leeds Castle in February.

The Produced in Kent-backed awards reward those who support local suppliers and producers. Putting the source of the food in the diners' face proved a shrewd move.

Karen Williams, the owner of the Mulberry Tree, said: "It works in two ways. It's great advertising for them, but it keeps them on their toes, too. For example – and not that it's ever happened – but if someone is eating a piece of meat they don't think comes up to scratch, the supplier's name is on the menu so they are named and shamed."

"It's quite an unusual thing to do and we get an awful lot of comments about it."

Today, nearly two years in, it has bucked the trend as its revenues increase in what is traditionally one of the slowest periods of the year. And with both her mother and daughter involved in the day-to-day running, it is very much a personal, family-run business.

Yet it is the food which puts this hidden treasure in the spotlight.

In a perfect fit with our campaign of urging our readers to demand locally produced and sourced food and drink – spearheaded by our www.foodforkent.co.uk website – it is a vision embraced wholeheartedly by the Mulberry Tree. And it takes a need to 'go



BUY LOCAL: Karen Williams, owner of the Mulberry Tree restaurant at Boughton Monchelsea, names her local suppliers on the menu



local' very seriously. All its meat comes from nearby Cranbrook – the beef from the Angley School farm and the venison from Staplehurst. Wild mushrooms are foraged locally by an expert and the fish is chosen fresh from the catch of the day by crews in Hythe. Even the flour for the freshly-made and baked bread is local. It has even secured

the once thought impossible and put together an entirely Kentish cheeseboard.

The owner adds: "Sourcing local is the way forward. Life changes and we evolve with it. By doing this we're championing the little people. I've always dealt with local suppliers – not as consciously as I do now – but it is important to me."

"We are a little person. An independent. We have to fight hard to survive. Spending locally is vital."

"Campaigns such as yours are tapping into a real shift right now. It's like cutting down on using carrier bags. Now when I go shopping I consciously make an effort to buy seasonal, local, food."

Delicious Easter Kentish feast delivered to your door

WHAT better way to celebrate Easter this year than sitting down to a delicious feast of Kent food and drink?

And by shopping at www.foodforkent.co.uk you can do just that. We have teamed up with the top producers from across the county to allow you to order up a tasty Easter for your friends and family.

Our one-stop online shop makes buying local easy – just browse the huge range and select your delivery window. Before you know it, it will be delivered straight to your door.

This week, we have Easter lamb, reared in Ash, near Canterbury. It comes from one of the oldest breeds in the world, The Romney – sometimes referred to as The Kent – producing consistent quality for centuries. And at £17.25 per leg you can save £2.73 on Sainsbury's prices of Welsh lamb.

We're also working closely with Griggs of Hythe to bring you some fabulous local fish while being kind to your pocket. There is 10 per cent off all our prices until Good Friday. You



can make savings compared to all the major supermarkets and be comfortable in the knowledge that your fish has come straight from the English Channel.

It's spring too, and this means lots of fresh local vegetables

and salads coming into season to arrive with you the day after they were picked and with minimal environmental impact. So have a happy Easter with www.foodforkent.co.uk.

Coming into season this week:

- Spring greens
- Spring lamb
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- Red mullet



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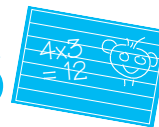
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BREAK TIME



University accord boosts grammar

CHATHAM Grammar School for Boys has joined forces with Canterbury Christ Church University in a bid to boost pupils' higher education aspirations.

The Progression Accord guarantees an interview to any student who meets the entry requirements, has a supportive reference from the school and a strong personal statement.

University chiefs will also advise students and parents on choosing courses and institutions, completing UCAS forms, what admissions tutors look for and preparations for interviews.

The accord was signed by Chatham Boys' head David Marshall and the university's pro vice-chancellor Prof Sue Piotrowski (pictured above).

Mr Marshall said: "We are delighted to sign this accord. Our pupils have reached a point where their accelerated curriculum has meant they have finished their A levels a year early, so this will enrich their options further. This will help us build upon our links with the university."

Prof Piotrowski said: "We have enjoyed strong links with Chatham Grammar for years and are delighted to strengthen these through this accord."

"It will give pupils opportunities to enter higher education locally through CCCU, should they choose to."

Girls told a life in maths really is the life of Riley

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

NUMBER-cruncher Rachel Riley spoke to Rochester Grammar School for Girls pupils at the national Big Bang science fair.

The new Countdown co-host spoke to the youngsters about her work with the Science: So What? So Everything campaign.

Ms Riley, who received an MA from Oxford University in mathematics, covering quantum theory, fluid mechanics and applied maths, said she was passionate about maths and science.

Speaking to the pupils at the London event, she said: "I've been enthusiastic about maths for as long as I can remember, from counting my steps as I'd climb the stairs at the age of two, to studying the intricacies of quantum teleportation at 22."

"For me one of the best things about maths is that it always holds a new challenge, however good you feel your maths brain is."

"Whether it's keeping your mind active with a sudoku on the train, or building your very own theoretical time machine, the mental stimulation is something that everyone can enjoy."

"The greatest inventions of our time would not have come about without some very clever scientists and behind those scientists, some equally clever mathematicians."

"Without maths and science there would be



IT ALL ADDS UP: Countdown brainbox Rachel Riley with Rochester Grammar girls at the science fair

no Finding Nemo, no online shopping and no television to watch Countdown on – how dull life would be.

"Exciting new fields of maths such as mathematical biology and environmental mathematics are now greatly affecting the world we live in."

"Highly sophisticated mathematical models, which may be too expensive or even impossi-

ble to recreate in the real world, are providing scientists with invaluable insights into some of the most serious problems we face today such as cancer and climate change."

"It is essential we continue to have our top people working on solutions and innovations for the future, and if they have time to develop a human teleportation device that might be nice, too."

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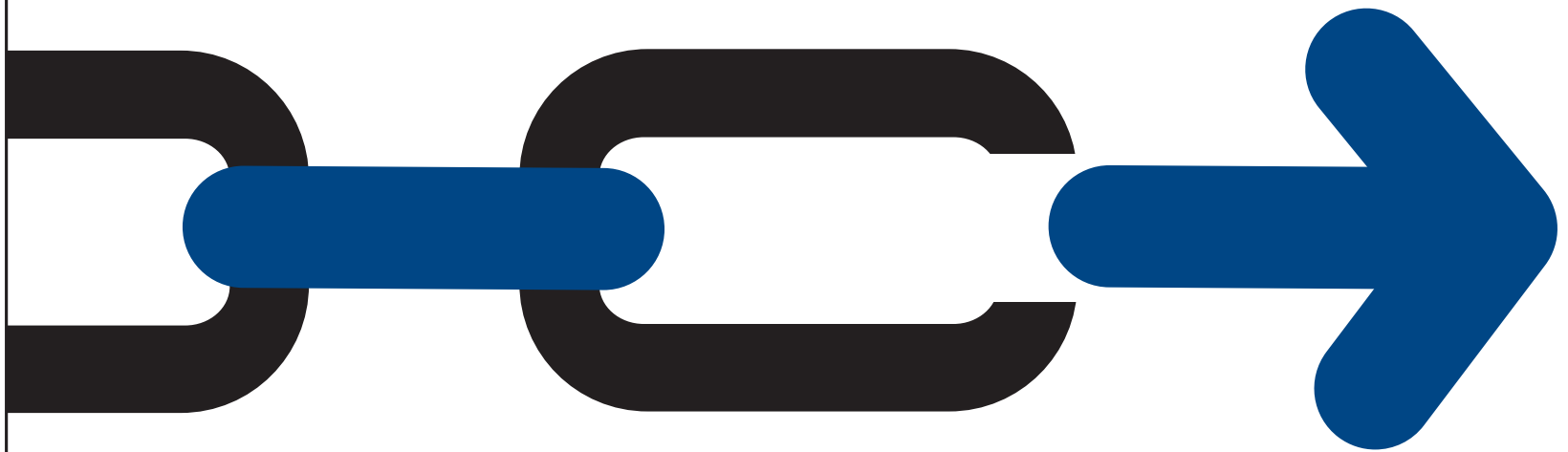
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Why adding an extra dimension is spoilt by zero specs-appeal

IF YOU listen to some industry experts, the future for technology is likely to be leaping out and biting us on the nose before too long. Almost literally.

Because 3D is back for the 21st century and, it seems, rather than pure novelty, it could actually become a vital ingredient in the way we consume entertainment media over the coming years.

Already there are some big names looking to bring some stand-out action to the big screen.

Steven Spielberg, a man with a fine history in generating a few bob for hungry film studios, is working on 3D movies, and George Lucas has long been rumoured to be working on transforming the Star Wars flicks into 3D, too.

Which, if nothing else, would at least allow everyone to punch Jar Jar Binks on the nose when his face looms out of the screen.

Video games would appear to be embracing it, too. Rumours have long circulated that the next generation of consoles may come complete with games capable of adding that all-important extra dimension.

The question is, will it really work? And the answer is probably only briefly.

There comes a point where consumers are fed up having to upgrade their equipment to accommodate the latest technological breakthrough.

First we had CDs replacing vinyl and tape. Then it was MP3. Televisions were once fat. Now they're flat. And high definition, too. And let's not get started on the great digital switchover.

But the biggest stumbling block, above and beyond all the technical upgrades will be perhaps the simplest piece of gadgetry ... the humble 3D glasses.

Those of a certain age will remember a time in the early Eighties when there was a brief flurry of excitement over 3D. There were some

shows on TV and Jaws 3 became Jaws 3D. The only problem was having to wear these horrible glasses with red and green sweet wrappers (so it seemed) for lenses.

Don't get me wrong, the effects were impressive. And watching Jaws 3 now is most amusing as severed limbs float pointlessly in the middle of the screen for far too long. Trust me, you had to be there. It did once float out and settle in your popcorn.

No-one liked wearing the glasses then, and no-one will really like wearing glasses again. And why would you?

They looked ridiculous. So let's not hear talk of how we must all brace ourselves to buy 3D enabled TVs or what have you.

We all have 3D eyes – and that's good enough for me.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All blogs are supplied with full name and address of the authors. They do not reflect the view of the newspaper but are designed to give our readers the chance to air their views.

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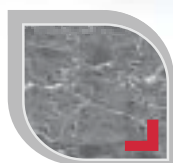
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Write to The Editor, Yourmedway, KoS Media, Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR.

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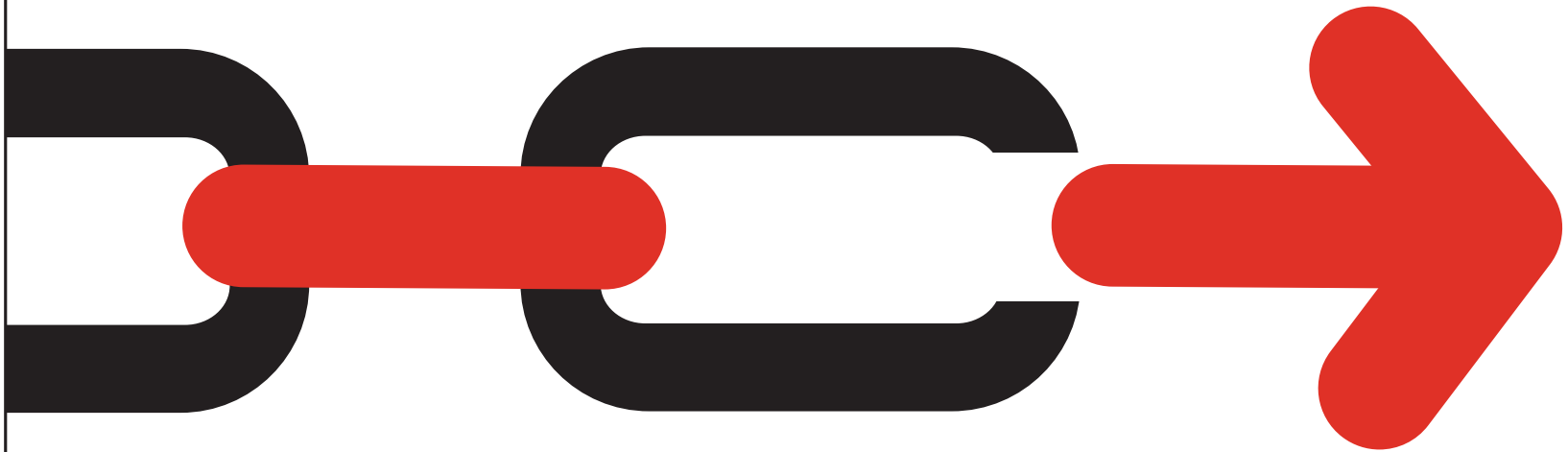
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Serving up a tasty Easter dish

TURKEY is not just for Christmas – with its variety of different cuts and uses, it's the perfect meat to enjoy all year round.

So with Easter just round the corner why not serve up a delicious turkey roast for all the family to enjoy?

Turkey is the only meat classed as a superfood and being low in fat as well as high in nutrients, vitamins and protein, it's no wonder why. It looks fantastic on the table, is easy to prepare and is enjoyed by young and old alike.

If you don't fancy cooking a whole bird, there are plenty of other turkey joints to choose from including a boned and rolled breast and an easy to carve crown.

After a wholesome turkey meal it's time to kick back and finish the day with a cup of tea and some delicious Easter cake.

To make cooking your turkey meal even easier, you will need some aluminium foil – BacoFoil is the strongest and most trusted brand, and is available in Extra Thick (ideal for grilling), Classic and Non-Stick varieties (ideal for everyday use) to make cooking and roasting fuss-free.

Additionally, BacoFoil Non-Stick makes your recipes even healthier as its unique coating means there's no need for additional fat or oil,



so it instantly reduces fat content without compromising on taste or appearance. Plus, as food doesn't stick to BacoFoil Non-Stick, the turkey comes out looking perfect.

We have teamed up with British Turkey and BacoFoil this Easter, to offer five of you the chance of winning a great prize. You could get your hands on some fantastic aluminium BacoFoil roasting trays and a roll of the all important extra strong BacoFoil Roasting Foil to help cook the turkey, as well as a beautiful tiered china cake stand and BacoFoil baking paper so you can enjoy an Easter tea in style. Also included are a British Turkey apron, shopping bag and copy of The Little Book of Great British Turkey Recipes.

To have a go at winning the lot all you have to do is simply answer the question below and



send your entry on a postcard along with your email address (if applicable), name, address, and daytime telephone number to Easter Comp, KOS Media, Apple Barn, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SR. The closing date is April 10, 2009.

Question: Which is the only meat classed as a superfood?

For great recipe ideas to serve this Easter go to www.britishturkey.co.uk/recipes.

To check out the entire Baco range and download your 20p off coupon log on to www.baco.co.uk.

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GO WILD THIS EASTER!

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TALK TIME

JANE MARTIN

The Tours of the Realm owner took the time to talk to Yourmedway about setting up and running her own tourist company.



Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

I was born and brought up in Kent. I have been married to John for 31 years and we have spent most of our married life living in different parts of the world.

While abroad I spent a great deal of time taking our visitors on tours of the areas where we were living. I always tried to make sure we saw not only the tourist sites but also the hidden treasures that were off the beaten track. With a lifelong interest in history and my experience of showing visitors around, my dream was to become a driver/guide and have a company of my own.

What is Tours of the Realm?

It offers sightseeing tours of rural and historic Britain to small and exclusive groups of up to five people with a particular focus on Kent and the South East.

Your job is touring Kent so you must have seen lots of places. What is your favourite part of Kent?

I love the Weald with its lovely old villages, windy lanes, world-renowned gardens and beautiful countryside. On the other hand, Romney Marsh is fascinatingly enigmatic whatever the season and you can't help being drawn into it. Walking along the White Cliffs from St Margaret's to Walmer is continually awe inspiring and I totally understand why Charles Dickens particularly loved this walk.

Kent has so much to choose from that it's impossible to have a favourite area!

How can people contact you to book a tour?

My website is www.toursoftherealm.com, you can email enquiries@toursoftherealm.com or call 07595 769615.

YOUR LETTERS

We had to vote against the budget

This week Medway residents will find their council tax bill arriving through the letterbox, with the unwelcome news that charges will be going up by nearly five per cent – nearly twice the rate of inflation.

As your council tax is going up by so much more than the rate of inflation, you would expect that costs would be frozen, or that services would be greatly improved. However, the Tories voted through 20 per cent increases in fees for adult learners, and for residents/visitors parking permits.

These permits have increased from £10 to £25 in only three years, despite the Tories promising they'd keep costs down.

The most disgraceful increase, however, was the 40 per cent increase in Meals on Wheels.

That's an extra £10 per week for many who can ill afford it.

At the same time the Labour proposal to provide one hour's free parking in all car parks was voted down, leaving residents with only the vague promise from the Tories to allow a couple of days' free parking around Christmas.

The Labour group will always vote against unsustainable budgets that contain price hikes that seem designed to hit the most vulnerable in our society.

It is also a nonsense for the Tories to say that Labour group members don't support spending on schools or transport when we vote against the budget – the



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vote is on the whole budget not on each item separately.

Unless, of course, the Tories believe David Cameron wants to dismantle the NHS, sack every police officer and close down every single care home, because

the national Conservative Party have voted against every Labour budget?

Cllr Bill Esterson,
Labour member for River Ward
on Medway Council,
by email.

Hopefully things can't get any worse

So unemployment is at its highest since 1997, when New Labour took over as a wave of optimism.

Jobs reality worse than you think

I'm afraid unemployment is even worse than Philip Menzies imagines (letters page April 1 issue).

The real figure is conveniently separated into different categories, so the truth is hidden.

The true figure of some six million is made up of those they admit to being unemployed, over a million on Job Seekers allowance, millions on incapacity benefit and almost a million lone parents deemed not to be in "the field of work". In total, around 20 per cent of Britain's working-age population. That's why taxes are so high!

These figures were frightening before the current Depression, now they are positively alarming as we are starting to see strikes and demonstrations.

As usual, governments afraid to take the proper action necessary and face up to reality have just been storing up even worse problems for the future.

Phil Granger,
by email.

Potholes putting our lives in danger

The state of Kent's roads leave much to be desired.

As a cyclist I can vouch for the fact that the potholes in the



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roads are a continuing problem and seem to be getting worse.

They are a danger to life and limb at a time when people are being encouraged to leave their cars at home and get on a more eco-friendly form of transport.

George Cornwallis
By email

Time to draw a line under easy exams

I was interested to see the exam questions which are being set for children across the UK in the current round of tests.

One of them asked for lines to be drawn to connect a natural material with where it comes from. Wool to sheep was one answer, another was cotton to plants and the third was silk to insects.

The other alternative provider options included crocodiles.

Now, who can read this sort of thing and not think these exams are being dumbed down?

The questions were meant to be answered by 16-year-olds so it wasn't as if they were set for young children.

For too long people have meekly accepted the assurances that children's results are getting better and schools are improving.

This just shows that is not the case at all. What is actually true is that anyone can pass an exam.

Mary Newsome
By email

Please volunteer to run 4 healthy cause

We would like to ask any of your fitness-minded readers to run for Meningitis UK in this year's Great North Run. General public entries are now full but we still have a few sought-after places left in our Meningitis Musketeers team for the world's biggest half marathon on September 20.

Meningitis UK has a single focus - to find a vaccine to eradicate all forms of meningitis. Tragically, meningitis and meningococcal septicaemia continue to affect thousands of people in the UK every year and kill more children under five than any other infectious disease.

Our Search 4 a Vaccine Campaign aims to raise £7million to fund research into eradicating meningococcal group B - the most common form of meningitis in the UK. This accounts for almost 90 per cent of all cases and there is currently no vaccine.

Everyone who runs for Meningitis UK will be part of the Meningitis Musketeers team, with the motto 'All 4 One and One 4 All' - to highlight the devastating fact meningitis can kill in under four hours and the importance of our campaign.

Full support will be given and everyone who participates will receive a free Search 4 a Vaccine running vest or T-shirt, and a handy information pack including hints and tips on how to prepare.

If you would like to take part and help us achieve our vision, please contact me on 0117 302 6191 for a sponsorship pack. We look forward to hearing from you.

Lauren Vincent
Events fundraiser,
Meningitis UK

Building up to a costly problem

At the last Medway Council meeting on March 6 I asked the Conservative council leader Rodney Chambers the question: 'The removal of the building at'

Clarification of comments in letter

We would like to make it clear that a letter from Cllr Stephen Hubbard printed in last week's paper about a council meeting discussing demolishing Strood Civic Centre included council leader Rodney Chambers saying local agents would be consulted about interest in converting the Aveling & Porter building for residential use.

This statement was omitted in the process of cutting down his letter from 900 words to 400 words to fit in the page.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused to Cllr Hubbard.

The Editor.

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A must have for every home Ewbank have been producing non-electric carpet sweepers for over a century and their products are still regarded as the best in the world.

This Evolution II manual carpet sweeper is no exception. Just as you would expect, it is lightweight and easy to use. It needs no electricity and is an easy and convenient way to clean your carpets and floors at a moment's notice.



Evolution II has two height settings for cleaning both carpet and hard floors and an extra wide 23.5cm sweeping path with a long coated steel handle that lies flat for cleaning under furniture.

The long life natural bristle brush efficiently sweeps up crumbs and dirt left behind by children and pets and the large capacity dustpan is easy to empty. Other features include a soft furniture guard and it also automatically cleans its own brushes. The Evolution II is available in silver for £29.99 and makes a perfect companion for your vacuum cleaner.

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Laughter isn't a false economy

Political activist and funnyman Mark Thomas is touring his latest show, *It's the Stupid Economy!* and wants your input to create a *People's Manifesto* to help the country

AFTER nearly 25 years of making people laugh and think at the same time, Mark Thomas is still making waves in the world of politics.

In his latest show, *It's The Stupid Economy!*, Thomas sets out to meet the people and gather together collective ideas about how we could make our country better. The comedian aims to create a *People's Manifesto*, which he will then 'road test' and see if he can make these ideas into reality.

Each audience will be asked to put forward its favourite ideas for dealing with the broken economy and the environment, giving Thomas something to work from as he attempts to bring about real change.

He is no stranger to making things happen, having been instrumental in bringing about a change in inheritance tax laws in 1998. Thomas fronted an investigation for Channel 4's *Dispatches* which uncovered the ways in which wealthy people had been avoiding inheritance tax by making their homes, art and furniture available for public viewing –

without telling anyone about it. In the following budget, the then-Chancellor Gordon Brown changed the law.

Born in South London in 1963, Thomas studied theatre arts at university and performed shows in miners' soup kitchens and fundraising events during the strike. Since taking to the stage as a comic in 1985, he has become arguably one of Britain's most prominent political activists.

With seven series of his own show, *The Mark Thomas Comedy Product*, on Channel 4 and a regular column in the *New Statesman* magazine, Thomas has made a career out of exposing injustice and scandal. His investigations have covered such diverse subjects as the use of torture and UK equipment in East Timor, Nestlé's change of labelling on baby milk in Africa, Coca Cola and the Immigration and Asylum Bill.

His activities reportedly led to a prominent politician asking civil servants to 'dig the dirt' on Thomas in 2001, but he has continued to investigate and demonstrate about issues such as anti-terror laws, arms dealing and nuclear weapons inspections.

In 2005 he became the Guinness

World Record Holder for the most political demonstrations in 24 hours. Other accolades include a Sony Radio Award, the UN Association Global Human Rights Defender Award, the Kurdish National Congress Medal of Honour and a Time Out Comedy Award. The third series of his television show received a special commendation at Amnesty International's media awards in 1999.

Last year Thomas was made an honorary doctor by Bradford University for his services to peace and his contribution as a comedian, political activist, presenter and investigative journalist, particularly for his campaigning on the ethics of the arms trade.

Mark Thomas will be at the Gulbenkian Theatre in Canterbury on Thursday, April 23; the Hazlitt Theatre in Maidstone on Tuesday, April 28 and the Trinity Theatre in Tunbridge Wells on Tuesday, June 30.

MARK THOMAS

Various dates
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FESTIVAL OF STEAM AND TRANSPORT

Sunday, April 12 and
Monday, April 13
Historic Dockyard, Chatham

MIGHTY steam engines, 80s power cars and wartime folding bicycles can all be admired at the Medway Festival of Steam and Transport.

One exciting addition this year will be the Extreme Globeriders, whose thrilling antics will amaze audiences as they pull off all kinds of breathtaking stunts inside a huge steel globe.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, there will also be a chance to step back in time to the 80s and see iconic vehicles from the A-Team, Dukes of Hazzard, Starsky and Hutch, Bullitt and the Blues Brothers.

From police vehicles and



commercial lorries to specially-built kit cars, exotic super cars and classic British models, there will be plenty to please any petrol head. There will also be lots more entertainment on offer all day with the river cruises, fairground dodgem, stalls and live music.

Tickets cost £11/£8.50 for adults, £7.50 for children and £32 for families. Return visits with 12-month tickets are not valid, but special discounts are on offer for 12-month ticket holders. For more information call 01634 823800 or go online at www.thedockyard.co.uk.



STEP up to the coconut shy and indulge in all the fun of the fair at Fort Amherst this weekend.

The traditional, country-style Easter fair will feature an array of fun attractions, including old favourites such as a hoopla, shooting gallery and coconut shy. There will also be an Easter hat parade, egg racing, the appearance of some authentic Napoleonic soldiers and lots more family fun on offer.

Visitors can take part in the free grand draw in the hope of winning the top prize – a signed official Arsenal team photograph. The event is run and funded by volunteers, so go along and support this fantastic community event.

DINNERLADIES

Tuesday, April 14 to Saturday, April 18
Orchard Theatre, Dartford

QUEUE up for a second helping of Dinnerladies as Victoria Wood's popular sitcom is brought to the stage.

Based on the second series of the hit BBC comedy, the show reunites two original cast members – Andrew Dunn and Shobna Gulati – and sees a new cast don the aprons of the hilarious lunchtime divas.

Set in the canteen of a fictional Manchester factory, Dinnerladies explores the daily dramas of the kitchen staff and other workers as they pass the serving hatch. The steady influence among the colourful characters is Bren, originally played by Wood, who puts up with the calamities and crises of Dolly, Jean, Twinkle and Anita. Viewers of the TV series were transfixed by Bren's reluctant romance with canteen manager Tony (played by Dunn) and the hilarious behaviour of



EASTER FAIR

Friday, April 10 to Monday, April 13
Fort Amherst, Chatham

The fair has an atmospheric setting in Europe's largest surviving Napoleonic fortress. It boasts 2,500ft of tunnels with fascinating rooms, passages and gun positions, and is even rumoured to be haunted.

The Easter Fair will run from 10am to 4pm daily. Admission costs £4 for adults and £2 for children. More information about Fort Amherst can be found on the website at www.fortamherst.com.

her eccentric mother, Petula.

Other much-loved characters include Stan, the factory's uptight handyman and scatty human resources manager Philippa.

Performances start at 7.45pm daily, with 2.30pm matinees on Wednesday and Saturday. Tickets are priced from £14.50 to £20.50. Book online at www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or call 01322 220000.

MEDWAY LEISURE

On track for some great music at Beacon Court

REDTRACK will be among the exciting bands performing at the Beacon Court Tavern in Gillingham next week.

The Southend band's first single was featured on Steve Lamacq's Radio 1 show, while live music fans might have seen them supporting The Maccabees and The View. See at the pub with Underground Heroes on Monday at 9pm. Tickets cost £5. Call 01634 853186.

Donn miss jazz night at the 4-4-Two club

THE Donn Barcott Band will be joined by a special guest at the regular jazz night in Gillingham tomorrow.

Guitar and banjo player Bob Pluck will be performing with the band at the 4-4-Two club on the corner of Featherby Road and the A2. The concert takes place in the ballroom and doors open at 7.15pm.

Tickets cost £6 including a snack. Call Donn on 01634 405037.

It's a right good knees up at Dickens World

FOR good old-fashioned entertainment in the music hall format, visit Dickens World in Chatham on Saturday.

Ivy Paige's Knees Up is described as a Cockney cabaret extravaganza, featuring comedy, songs and lots of audience participation. Tickets for 5pm family show cost £6/£3, while 8pm adults-only show is £15 with three-course meal. Call 01634 890421 or visit www.dickensworld.co.uk.

Spotlite is on kids fun this Easter holidays

SPOTLITES Theatre Company presents a variety of interactive shows for children at Kings Theatre, Chatham, over the Easter holidays.

Shows on offer during April include Sleeping Beauty & The Time Lords and Three Potter Pigs. Children can also take part in a number of events, all running at the Kings Theatre in High Street. See www.spotlites.co.uk or call 01634 403737.

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BY ALISON PURDY

WHEN I was told we were going for a walk in the island's interior on our first day on the South Pacific island of Tahiti, I imagined a gentle stroll through the lush green jungle that covers much of the island.

I hadn't imagined that a couple of hours later I would be waist-deep in gushing water dressed in a wet suit with a harness strapped round me, scrambling up a ravine.

Like most people, my image of Tahiti and her 118 islands scattered over five archipelagos in the South Pacific was of sun-soaked shores lined with bamboo bungalows perched on stilts

There's more to Tahiti's many islands

over turquoise-blue sea. I expected the sort of destination that mainly attracts honeymooners drawn to the island by its romantic isolation.

That is certainly on offer. However, as my day spent clambering up a volcanic lava-tube and hoisting myself up waterfalls proved, there is far more to the islands.

I had never been canyoning before and the experience was both terrifying and exhilarating. When I did manage to look up from where I was putting my feet, I was stunned by the incredible beauty that surrounded me.

Green mountains densely covered in what looked like large broccoli heads sloped up to

the sky. Below, the land dropped down dramatically to the sea.

In an effort to promote Tahiti's unique cultural identity, the Radisson Plaza Resort Hotel in the bustling capital city Papeete, has its own full-time 'cultural animator' who puts on daily demonstrations of traditional dance and crafts as an introduction to Tahitian culture.

The day after our canyoning adventure, we boarded a sea catamaran for the half hour trip from Tahiti to the even greener island of Moorea. The island's Sofitel beach resort does live up to the honeymoon brochure billing with individual bungalows all either standing on

stilts over the water or lining the beach front with the most breathtaking ocean views.

Our next stop was the geographically-unusual island of Rangiroa – which consists of a string of coral encircling a turquoise lagoon and is one of the world's most popular diving destinations and famous for the black pearl.

Tahiti and her collection of islands may be the epitome of the South Seas holiday hide-away – but those keen to do more than lie on the beach enjoy a fantastic choice of leisure options, from scuba diving to hiking in the mountains and searching for that elusive and perfect black pearl.

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FACT FILE: TAHITI

Time difference	-11 hours (GMT)
Language	French
Largest city	Papeete
Population	178,130
Currency	Pacific Franc (approx 130 to £1)
Religion	Christian
Climate	Tropical

Travel details

Alison Purdy flew to Papeete with British Airways and Air Tahiti Nui via New York and LA and she was a guest of Radisson Plaza Resort, Tahiti, Sofitel Moorea Beach Resort, Moorea and Raira Lagoon, Rangiroa.

Operator Turquoise Holidays offers a 10-night package to Tahiti from £2,295 (two sharing), including Virgin flights ex-Heathrow to Papeete with Virgin and Air Tahiti Nui (via LA), three nights at Radisson Plaza Tahiti (room-only), four nights at Sofitel Moorea (room only), three nights at Relais de Josephine (half-board), domestic flights, transfers.

Leisure activities include a day's canyoning bookable through Mato-Nui Excursions, with picnic, £73; Moorea Hiking is booked directly through Tohie'a Excursions; hike to pass of the three pine trees, with picnic, £43; snorkelling at Blue Lagoon on Rangiroa, £44.

Turquoise Holidays reservations: 01494 678 400 and www.turquoiseholidays.co.uk.

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Enjoy a summer holiday by the sea on the Somerset coast. Set in 17 acres of landscaped gardens near a long sandy beach, Sand Bay is a couple of miles from Weston-Super-Mare. Leisure facilities include an indoor swimming pool. Each evening there is entertainment featuring the Best of British comedy and tribute acts. Accommodation is in single-storey en-suite chalets with colour TV and tea/coffee tray. Sand Bay is a few minutes from Junction 21 of the M5, offering easy access from all over the country. As a self-drive visitor, you'll find Sand Bay is well-placed to visit a host of West Country attractions. The cities of Bath, Bristol & Wells are a short drive and offer a wealth of diversity from Brunel's steam ship, the SS Great Britain (in Bristol), the ancient Roman Baths (in Bath) and Britain's most beautiful cathedral (in Wells). There's plenty of unspoilt coastal scenery nearby, from the sandy beaches of Burnham and Weston Super Mare to the dramatic cliffs and coves of the Exmoor coast.

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50P BAR

Set among landscaped gardens, Norton Grange has a distinctly tropical feel. The resort overlooks the Solent and has a wide range of activities on offer, including a heated indoor pool, all-weather bowls, a fitness studio, archery, snooker, darts and more.

Live nightly entertainment includes cabaret and dancing with Warner's in-house entertainment team and visiting artists to add variety. We've added a 50p bar from 12 noon to 11pm every day for house beers & spirits, house wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers, tea & coffee. Accommodation is in en-suite chalets located near the entertainment and restaurant venues. All chalets have a colour TV and hospitality tray.

PRICE INCLUDES: 4 nights in a twin/double en-suite chalet

• 4 dinners & 4 breakfasts • 50P bar every day - from 12noon to 11pm - includes house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & mixers, tea & coffee • Live cabaret entertainment • Self drive with car ferry included

Isle of Wight Christmas Party at Warner Norton Grange

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JOHN LEWIS

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WAITROSE

Simmel cake, price £9.99



JOHN LEWIS

Booja Booja Kashmiri organic egg, price £20

Eggstra special

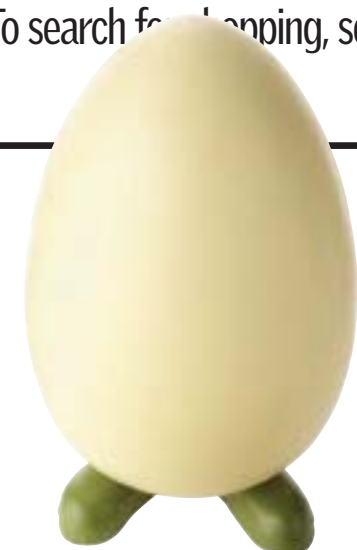
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MARKS AND SPENCER

Iced biscuits, price £1.49 each



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JOHN LEWIS

Easter egg head,
price £12



WAITROSE

Linden Lady box of 15
chocolates, price £6.50



MATALAN

Easter bunny,
price £10



MARKS AND SPENCER

Molly Moo chocolate
treat, price £3.99



MEDWAY SHOPPING

Protect yourself with lotions this summer

GET ready for the sun with Superdrug's offers on selected lotions.

A 200ml bottle of Ambre Solaire moisturising milk at factor 20 is buy-one-get-one free at £9.97, while factor 50 Solait kids lotion has the same offer at £7.97 per bottle.

Superdrug's own Hayfever allergy relief tablets are £2.34 for a pack of seven, or buy two for £2.99, at the Hempstead Valley, Gillingham High Street and Pentagon Centre stores.

Pimp your PC with new technical equipment

SAVE on IT costs when you shop at WH Smith for technical accessories.

A Logitech E1000 webcam is 75 per cent off at £8.56, while a matching PC headset for use with free online phone service Skype is £12.49.

A Lexmark X3650 printer, which is also a scanner and copier machine, is 50 per cent off at £49.99, while digital photo frames start from only £34.26, at the Pentagon Centre, Hempstead Valley and Gillingham High Street stores.

Don't leave out the cats and dogs this weekend

WHEN all the family is enjoying Easter do not forget your furry friends.

Chocolate is toxic to dogs and cats, so Pets At Home has produced a special range of chocolate-free Easter eggs for cats, dogs – available in both adult and puppy sizes – and small animals such as hamsters.

Priced from £1.99, there is a delicious treat for even the smallest member of the family at the Horsted Retail Park store in Chatham.

Spend an evening with morning fitness expert

LEADING fitness, diet and lifestyle expert Joanna Hall visits Chamneys in Tunbridge Wells next Wednesday.

The former This Morning guru will be giving two talks about topics such as how diet and walking can combine to achieve good health and weight loss.

The event runs from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on April 15. There will be time for a Q&A session, refreshments and a mini facial or hand massage. Tickets cost £12.50. See www.chamneys.com for details.

Sign up for the secrets of good skin in store

SKINCARE specialist Liz Earle will be signing copies of her new book at Bluewater next week.

The author, TV presenter and health and beauty specialist reveals the key to her radiant look in Liz Earle: Skin Secrets.

She will be appearing at the Waterstone's store from 5.30pm on Thursday, April 16.

Liz Earle: Skin Secrets is published by Kyle Cathie and priced at £19.99.

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Out & about this Easter?

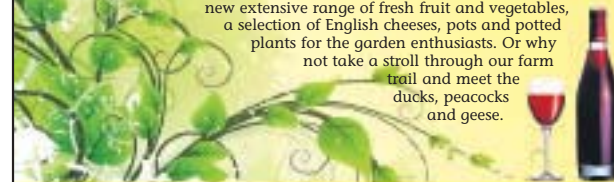
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YOUR TV REVIEW

■ BY TOM BETTS

PRIMEVAL
ITV1, 6.15pm, Saturday
ROBIN HOOD
BBC One, 7.45pm, Saturday

IT'S very difficult to know what ITV is up to with Primeval, other than copy Doctor Who as much as it possibly can, of course.

Each time I've tuned into this programme over the course of the past few series the plot has been almost the same as the last time.

The basic scenario revolves around these basics: Lots of running around, time portal or wormhole opens up, big beast of some kind smashes stuff up, more running around, thing is killed or disappears back through portal, every one breathes a big sigh of relief and has a nice sit down.

Intersperse that with Hannah Spearritt, the girl who used to be in S Club 7 – you know, the really boyish-looking one – appearing as confused as the viewers while spending a lot of time in sports leisurewear.

This doesn't add up to a masterpiece.

Okay, so it may not try to be anything other than throwaway TV, but sometimes you feel like the writers of this have just given up and opted for the same story each and every week.

While Doctor Who episodes can vary wildly in quality (largely depending on who's penned it) this never lifts itself above banged-together-by-a-bunch-of-sixth-formers level.

The special effects are hardly Jurassic Park either.

I'm afraid to say the makers of this one have got dinosaur pie all over their faces.

Over on BBC One, meanwhile, Robin Hood has returned to our Saturday nights to rob from the rich to give to the poor once again.

Mind you, this is another half-



WOOD YOU BELIEVE IT? Jonas Armstrong plays the lead role in BBC drama Robin Hood

hearted effort that has never really taken off and looks like it will crash off our screens next year.

There's something about the lead, Jonas Armstrong, that doesn't really gel. He seems far too young and neither cuts a dash or could bowl a maiden over.

Looking more like the lost Gallagher brother than a hero of folklore who could lead Sherwood Forest's finest into battle, it shows that if your main man is flawed then it's going to be hard work getting the rest to work.

I know that personal hygiene may not have been as high on the agenda as it is now, but a shave and haircut wouldn't go amiss, Robin.

YOUR WEEK'S HOROSCOPE

BY RUSSELL GRANT



AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19)
RESIST the urge to go on a spending spree. You need to hang on to your cash now. There will be plenty of time to buy what you want soon. If you're having a hard time making ends meet, this would be a good time to return to school. Don't underestimate the importance of diplomacy.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aquarius** 09067-531762



TAURUS (Apr 21-May 21)
DON'T let friends push you into a decision you'll later regret. You're the type who likes to think things through so rushing into a situation will only create more stress. It's especially important to take your time with a new romance. You could finally get word about a new job.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Taurus** 09067-531753



LEO (Jul 24-Aug 23)
TENSIONS are mounting between you and a prospective partner. In many ways this seems like the worst time to launch an affair. You have so many financial and work responsibilities. What you fail to realise is that you need to balance work with play.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Leo** 09067-531756



SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22)
ALL is not fair in love and war. Beware of engaging in underhanded behaviour, or it will come back to haunt you. If you're in love with someone who is obsessed with somebody else, stay calm. The tide will turn in your favour; provided you refrain from jealous displays.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Scorpio** 09067-531759



PISCES (Feb 20-Mar 20)
AN angry outburst could drive a romantic partner from your door. You need to learn how to express your frustrations in a healthier way. Right now you tend to bury your feelings until they fester and explode. This wreaks havoc on all of your relationships.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Pisces** 09067-531763



GEMINI (May 22-Jun 22)
AN overbearing boss is making life tough. It gets you down you that you can't get up and leave this restrictive situation. Remember you have other responsibilities. By staying put, you'll be doing the wisest thing. The good news is that your love life is getting better.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Gemini** 09067-531754



VIRGO (Aug 24-Sep 23)
A BUSINESS or romantic contact is tired of you dragging your feet. Unfortunately, you are just not ready to make a serious commitment. It's better to break things off now, before either one of you becomes too fully invested in this relationship. A financial matter is music to your ears.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Virgo** 09067-531757



SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21)
HIDDEN resentments are coming to the surface. You're tired of obeying a stuffy person's orders. Quitting a dead-end job may be the best course of action. If you're looking for a better opportunity, spread the word among friends. Who you know is more important than what you know.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Sagittarius** 09067-531760



ARIES (Mar 21-Apr 20)
DON'T push your luck at work. Although a colleagues methodical approach annoys you, it's essential the two of you get along. Putting them under pressure will backfire. Actually, you could benefit by adopting some of their vigilance. A relationship is coming to fruition.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Aries** 09067-531752



CANCER (Jun 23-Jul 23)
YOU have to be very careful when dealing with legal and financial paperwork. Answer every question. If you don't know how an entry should be phrased, check with the authorities. A domestic problem could finally be resolved. The result helps you to make a lifestyle change.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Cancer** 09067-531755



LIBRA (Sep 24-Oct 23)
YOU'RE being pressured to churn out work at twice the normal rate. Let people know that their demands are unreasonable. If they threaten you with dismissal, don't worry. A personal project is coming to fruition. Getting paid to do what you love is a real possibility.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Libra** 09067-531758



CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20)
ANGRY words could fly thick and fast between you and a conservative authority figure. You're tired of being treated like an ignoramus. By standing your ground they'll grow to respect you. You may not have a lot of experience, but you are a hard worker.
• To find out more about what the stars have in store call Russell on **Capricorn** 09067-531761

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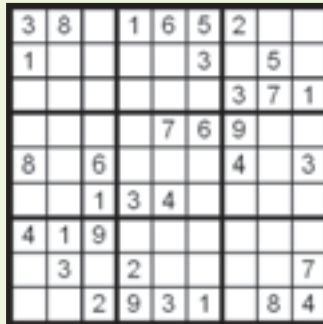
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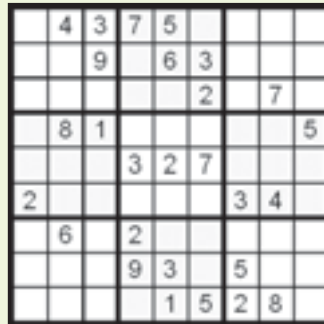
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EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Angela met hysteria about purple gem (8)
- 6 Springy? (6)
- 9 It is light yellow and soft in marshy ground (6)
- 10 Many a caper by the Parisian in song (8)
- 11 Ought enemies be removed from place for public worship? (7-5)
- 13 Shoot, say, the rapid (5)
- 14 Engagement involved both later (9)
- 17 Would it foil attempts to catch it? (9)
- 19 Hebridean island with no priest? (5)
- 21 Post for 25% of the employees (12)
- 24 Very modern step wise man concealed (5-3)
- 25 Royal colour (6)
- 26 Team from Plymouth, we hear, or Lochgilphead area (6)
- 27 Risked including Kenneth when it became more gloomy (8)

DOWN

- 2 Thousand unwell at the plant (4)
- 3 It displays the bill of fare (9)
- 4 Rodney floundered in the distance (6)
- 5 A lightweight slab of clay outside that can be perceived by touch (7)
- 6 Sour-tasting wine from France eg Ray rejected (8)
- 7 Greek character included fashionable beast! (5)
- 8 Sailor who is fit? (4,6)
- 12 Rider to display item of clothing (10)
- 15 Military unit's job supporting church (4-5)
- 16 Nevertheless seeking a monopoly (5,3)
- 18 Stop payment - we object during pay out (7)
- 20 Pre-arranged strike first using electronic device (6)
- 22 In a trick you caught little Richard (5)
- 23 Sad sportsman (4)

SCRIBBLE HERE



QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Persuasive (8)
- 6 Develop (6)
- 9 Spray liquid (6)
- 10 Dirtiest (8)
- 11 Monitor lizard (6,6)
- 13 Brown pigment (5)
- 14 Pretender (9)
- 17 Teaching area (9)
- 19 Backbone (5)
- 21 Sweet coloured nut (6,6)
- 24 Kerosene (8)
- 25 Hate (6)
- 26 Zenith (6)
- 27 In transit (2,3,3)

DOWN

- 2 Northern Scandinavian (4)
- 3 Speed (9)
- 4 Skin disease (6)
- 5 Faint-heartedly (7)
- 6 Scenery (8)
- 7 Porcelain (5)
- 8 Bad luck (10)
- 12 Improve (10)
- 15 Disown (9)
- 16 Pierce through (8)
- 18 Resort in Florida (7)
- 20 Drinking-cup (6)
- 22 Delta (anag. (5)
- 23 Order to stop) (4)

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

SUDOKU SOLUTIONS No81

EASY



MEDIUM



HARD



Answers to all of this week's quizzes can be found on our website

CRYPTIC SOLUTION No81

ACROSS: 1 Sky-sign 5 Tell off 9 Baku
10 Suspension 12 Low-level 13 Thief
14 Hundred Years 17 Aladdin's lamp 21
Idiocy 23 Embossed 24 Ventilator 25 Tizz
26 In place 27 Hayride. DOWN: 2 Klaxon
3 Squelched 4 Gas oven 6 Ejected 7 Lisle
8 Footsore 11 Self-respect 15 Expositor 16
Bludgeon 18 Idyllic 19 Alberta 20 Seized
22 Octal.

QUICK SOLUTION No82

ACROSS: 1 Eloquent 6 Become 9 Spritz
10 Muckiest 11 Komodo dragon 13 Umber
14 Hypocrite 17 Classroom 19 Spine 21
Jordan almost 24 Paraffin 25 Lathe 26
Quickness 4 Eczena 5 Timidly 6 Backdrop
7 China 8 Mistrust 12 Ameliorate 15
Reputable 16 Transfix 18 Orlando 20
Goblet 22 Dealt 23 Whoa.

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Fine time for illegal foreign drivers

■ BY STEVE KNIGHT

LAW-breaking foreign drivers will finally have the book thrown at them after new powers were handed to the police.

For years non-UK citizens have got away with minor traffic offences because officers did not have the power to issue on-the-spot fines or add points to their licences.

However, reforms to the Road Safety Act 2006 introduced this week will now allow officers to do just that – with a maximum penalty of £900.

About three million foreign vehicles enter Britain annually, with many of them travelling through Kent after arriving at the ports.

Between October 1, 2007, and September 30, 2008, foreign vehicles contributed to 72 accidents and 113 injuries on the county's roads.

Announcing the new powers, Chief Insp Roscoe Walford said: "The new law will help police deal more effectively with non-UK residents who commit driving offences.

Disincentive

"The motoring public and general community have long wanted this. It provides a fairer system whereby all motorists are treated the same regardless of who they are and where they are from, and it brings us into line with other European countries.

"Many foreign drivers ignore our road rules because they know that even if they are caught, nothing will happen. But by hitting them in the pocket immediately, the new powers create a disincentive to break the law.

"If this saves one person from death or serious injury and one family from suffering the trauma of losing a loved one, the new law has done its job."

During the 2007-08 financial year, 841 foreign drivers were caught by speed cameras on Kent's roads but none of them received fines.

In contrast, 41,585 penalties were issued to British drivers. Officers were previously unable to issue fines to non-

Reforms to allow police to punish all road users

UK citizens because there was no guarantee they would be paid within 28 days and there was no way of knowing if drivers had committed previous offences.

However, the new rules have changed all that and also now enable police to seize non-roadworthy vehicles or ones owned by foreign-

ers who cannot pay their fine. They will also be able to add penalty points to a driver's licence for the first time.

The new powers were launched at the M20 services near Leeds Castle, with road safety minister Jim Fitzpatrick also in attendance.

He said: "We want to keep our roads as safe

as possible and these measures mean any driver who breaks the rules of the road will have to face the consequences.

"The only way for drivers and hauliers to avoid tough penalties will be to obey our traffic laws and ensure their vehicles are fully roadworthy."

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what's inside

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Now it's even more important that you organise your estate.

Making a will ensures your family don't have more heartache after you've gone

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Getting your business back to basics to ride the recession

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What seemed like a happy

divorce settlement before the current downturn, could now be heading back to court as property and other split assets decrease in value

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Keep tax stresses out of your relationship by being prepared for the future

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All you need to know to be ahead of the game when it comes to looking for a job in these tricky times

Pages 19

Don't let debt take control. Get the help you need with loans and the advice to put your finances on the road to recovery to ride out the recession

Essential guide to where you can save

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■ Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering free man and a van for clients renting storage for longer than three months

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That's why we have produced this Money Matters guide aimed at offering some timely advice to businesses fighting their way through the recession.

We have also included some top tips for individuals trying to balance their own books and plan for their safer financial future.

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Be prepared, it will be to your credit

By **TONY PATEY**

EXPERTS are predicting that more than 40,000 companies will be declared insolvent during 2009 – a rise of 35 per cent in last year, and 62 per cent higher than in 2007.

To help ensure your firm doesn't become one of the victims, national insurance broker Bluefin Insurance Services, which has offices in Gravesend, Maidstone and Tonbridge, has drawn up a list of protection tips for recession-battered firms.

Peter Castle, executive director, pinpointed, for example, money owed as a crucial factor that could affect cash flow.

"Money owed may represent as much as 40 per cent of a company's actual assets.

"What would happen to your business if a major supplier or creditor went under? As insolvencies climb, having adequate credit insurance could mean the difference between your business surviving or failing."

His six top tips to keep one step ahead of the increased dangers facing businesses in 2009 are:

- Take a long-term view over redundancies. Cutting too much from your skills base may create irreversible workload pressures.



POCKET WATCH: Take appropriate steps to see your business survive economic downturn

- Ensure your business employs best practice in employment matters. Recent rises in statutory redundancy pay rates mean layoffs are more expensive than ever.

- Take care when changing your insurance cover, and do so only if you are sure it will not compromise your ability to win new business. Many organisations, particularly in the public sector, have strict insurance requirements included in their supplier contracts.

- Be realistic about any insurance premium savings obtainable from changes to your cover. Remember that legal and regulatory risk exposure does not recede in a recession.

- Don't give staff a reason to defect to rivals by cutting back on training and risk management. Dissatisfied staff are more likely to try to commit fraud, which is on the rise as the economy worsens.

- Credit insurance can provide vital protection from the potentially terminal disruption of bad debt and late payment. Make sure you have adequate cover.

Mr Castle said: "With professional advice, awareness of the risks ahead and perhaps just a little bit of luck, well-prepared businesses have every chance of surviving the downturn."

Your guide to get through the recession

A NEW guide to help businesses in Kent find their way through the economic crisis has been published by the South East England Development Agency (Seeda).

It's called Open for Business – A Guide to Business Support in the South East and it offers businesses a simple map to what is on offer through Seeda and its regional partners.

Seeda said it is working with Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council and the Government's Real Help for Businesses Now scheme to provide help in areas from accessing finance through to tackling redundancy.

Many of these initiatives are available through Business Link, the Seeda-funded business support service, which also offers free business 'health checks'.

Jeff Alexander, Seeda's executive director for global competitiveness, said: "We are now focusing our efforts on helping South East businesses through these extremely challenging times.

"This package of measures can make a real difference, and thousands of businesses have already taken advantage.

"I would strongly urge any business feeling the effects of the downturn to get in touch with Business Link to see what help is available."

For further information, Business Link is on 0845 6009006.

For copies of the Open for Business booklet, send an e-mail detailing the number of copies required and recipient address to pressoffice@seeda.co.uk.

Seeda is a government-funded agency responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of the South East.



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Ready for the new employment law?



Solicitor Nadia Omar offers this checklist for recession-hit firms who will also be facing new employment law rules coming in early in April

The New ACAS Code of Practice

The Employment Act 2008 will repeal the controversial statutory dispute resolution procedures.

It will be replaced by the new ACAS Code of Practice on disciplinary and grievance procedures.

This is expected to reduce the regulatory burden for employers and provide greater flexibility for managing workplace disputes.

The code only applies to disciplinary and grievance matters and does not apply to redundancy dismissals.

Employers are encouraged to resolve disputes informally and consider the use of mediation.

Employers should carry out the disciplinary and grievance process without delay and ensure all matters are fully investigated.

Failure to follow the disciplinary procedure will no longer render a dismissal automatically unfair and employers will not be penalised for technical breaches of the code.

Employers should beware: grievances have been extended to cover all concerns, problems or complaints, and employees no longer need to raise a grievance and wait 28 days prior to issuing a claim.

Tribunals will have the power to increase or decrease an award by 25 per cent for an unreasonable failure to comply with the code.

Trade union membership rules

The implementation of section 19 of the act will entitle a trade union to exclude or expel members who belong to a political party such as the BNP.

To safeguard individuals from arbitrary abuse, union rules must allow it, a fair procedure must be followed and it must not result in the loss of an individual's livelihood or other "exceptional hardship".

The low number of claims that are lodged

against unions for wrongful expulsion suggests that this amendment is unlikely to have much practical effect.

The Employment Tribunals (Constitution and Rules of Procedure) (Amendment) Regulations 2008

The regulations remove a judge's discretion not to issue a default judgment if a response is not filed.

This makes it essential for respondents to file a response within the 28-day time limit. Failure to do so will bar the respondent from submitting a defence and may result in the claim being determined without a hearing.

The rules relating to the withdrawal and dismissal of claims have been clarified.

If a claim has been withdrawn, respondents should apply to have the claim dismissed within 28 days. This will bar a claimant from re-lodging the claim.

Furthermore, proceedings which have been withdrawn and settled through ACAS will be automatically dismissed by the tribunal. This will avoid the need to make a separate dismissal application.

New rules on electronic communication will assist parties relying on evidence by disabled witnesses or those abroad who are unable to attend the hearing.

Employment Tribunals Act 1996 (Tribunal Composition) Order 2009

This will enable cases of unpaid holiday pay to be heard by an employment judge sitting alone.

Claims are usually heard by an employment judge and two lay members.

This order should result in such cases being dealt with faster and more efficiently.

• *Nadia Omar is a solicitor in the employment department at law firm Thomson Snell & Passmore, which has offices in Tunbridge Wells and Greenhithe.*

Taxman will be getting tough

KENT companies could soon find they're getting unexpected visits from the taxman as HM Revenue and Customs picks up tough new powers to enter business premises.

Steve Carpenter, tax manager at Maidstone-based DSH Chartered accountants and business advisors, warned: "From April 1, HMRC will have a new code of powers and penalties that will make it easier for them to obtain information and, if irregularities are found, to match a penalty to the seriousness of the mistake or omission."

The powers being given to HMRC, which aim to identify situations where there is a greater risk of mistakes being made in the completion of tax returns, will enable officers to:

- Obtain documents from a business at any time, even if a return has yet to be filed.



ADVICE: Steve Carpenter

- Request information from third parties, such as banks.
- Enter business premises to inspect the premises, business assets and documents.

Mr Carpenter continued: "Although genuine mistakes will not incur a charge, penalties will be charged as a percentage of any additional tax due and are banded depending upon circumstances."

"For example, if the mistake arises because you

failed to take reasonable care in completing your tax return, the penalty will be up to 30 per cent, but if it is a deliberate understatement that you attempt to conceal, the penalty could be up to 100 per cent.

"The concept of 'taking reasonable care' is key to the value of the penalty and will vary from taxpayer to taxpayer."

"A large company with its own accounts department will be expected to have a higher standard of accuracy in its record keeping than an individual, but both must keep adequate records to enable them to complete the required returns and to spot a significant error."

"The processes are becoming more structured and so, to avoid penalties in the future, it is important to ensure your records are adequate and to seek advice for your particular situation."

By **PAM LOCH** and **ANDREW BAYJOU**

EMPLOYERS need to brace themselves now for more employment law changes.

Some changes will have an impact on how businesses have to manage their employees, while others will result in a greater financial burden on businesses.

On April 6 the Employment Act 2008 abolishes the much-criticised statutory disciplinary, dismissal and grievance procedures, and businesses will be required to comply with the new ACAS Code of Practice.

The code will not be legally binding but it will be regarded as best practice and it will be used to determine whether a fair procedure has been followed.

Defending an employment claim will become easier, though Employment Tribunals will no longer be compelled to decide that a dismissal was automatically unfair if the employer failed to follow one part of the old procedure.

Interestingly the code will not apply to all dismissals. For example it won't apply to redundancies.

There are also complex transitional provisions and employers should exercise caution and take early advice as a failure to follow the code could result in an employment tribunal increasing an award of compensation by up to 25 per cent.

Aside from the demise of the statutory procedures, other changes impacting on businesses from April 6 include increases in:

- Statutory Sick Pay to £79.15 a week
- Statutory Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Pay to £123.06 a week.

These increases are in line with the annual changes the Government announces in these benefits and in certain cases the payments can be recovered from the Government. Rumours abound that statutory redundancy pay may be increased from the present cap of £350 a week – but these remain rumours at present.

Aside from those benefits increasing, holiday entitlement is also increasing. From April 1 the

NEW LAW: From April 1 the minimum paid holiday for workers will increase to 5.6 weeks or 28 days each year



Businesses prepare for the tide of change

minimum paid holiday for workers increased to 5.6 weeks or 28 days each year. This should be pro-rated for part-time workers.

For businesses already offering workers 28 days including bank holidays there is no change.

For those that don't offer this at the moment though, they should review their terms and conditions to ensure 28 days holiday is the minimum entitlement.

April also sees the extension of the right to request flexible working to parents of children up to 16 years of age being introduced.

Businesses should ensure that their employment policies and procedures reflect this new right. Although it does not give a right to flexible working, businesses should prepare themselves for an increase in requests to work flexibly from employees with children

over six years of age.

From April 6, a failure to pay the national minimum wage to workers could result in a criminal penalty and a claim for underpayment of arrears plus a financial penalty.

HM Revenue and Customs will have compliance officers with additional inspection powers to search, seize and remove documents.

National minimum wage offences will carry criminal penalties ranging from £100 to £5,000.

Some of these changes could have a negative impact on businesses and increase their costs at an already difficult time. However the abolition of the statutory procedures should be a very positive step for businesses going forward.

• *Pam Loch and Andrew Baxjou of employment law firm Loch Associates.*

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Renting or buying? Move your business into the right property

■ BY TONY PATEY

MANY firms battling the recession are thinking of moving – but a commercial property is a major undertaking not to be taken lightly as it can affect a company's growth for a long time.

Experts say there are as many opinions regarding buying or renting commercial properties as there are commercial properties – so before you decide which way to jump, your business should take into account its own strengths, weaknesses and future plans.

What suits others won't necessarily suit you. Your premises may turn out to be your business's largest fixed asset, which makes your choice of whether to rent or buy property an important one.

There are many reasons for renting, including:

- Saving capital outlay
- Flexibility of location
- Savings on maintenance and other costs.

As a rule of thumb, renting is a good option for new businesses as it cuts down on the capital outlay needed and potentially saves having to borrow as much capital from other sources.

If you have a low cash flow and prefer to keep your property costs flexible, then renting may be the best option as it releases more money to invest in equipment, stock and employees' salaries.

Renting also enables your business the flexibility to relocate at relatively short notice should you need to expand or follow business trends.

The responsibility for maintenance, fixtures and security also rest with the owner of the property, taking away the uncertainty of these costs and helping you to budget better.

One downside of renting is the possibility of future rent rises, so it is important to know how and when the rent will be reviewed, prior to signing the lease.

The main advantages of buying are:

- Owning an asset
- Flexibility of the space to suit the business
- Tax advantages

In the long term a property that has been purchased with a commercial mortgage has the potential to increase in value, which strengthens your assets.



EASY?: If you have a low cash flow and prefer to keep your property costs flexible, then renting may be the best option

A mortgage is usually the highest fixed cost of any business, so if you are a company with a good cash flow and relatively low fixed costs then purchasing a property may well be right for you.

When you own your commercial property you can develop the space as you require with the possibility of subletting any unused room, giving your business extra income.

Generally mortgage repayments are at similar levels to rental payments, and although mortgage interest rates may increase on a commercial mortgage these are tax-deductible.

When you own a property the possibility of large rent increases is removed, which enables you to budget better and provides greater security.

One of the downsides of buying is you'll need to come up with a large deposit, and in the initial stages of any business this money could be put to other more immediate business uses.

It also becomes more difficult to relocate your business should circumstances change.

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Where there's a will there's a better way

WE can always be sure of two things – recession or no recession – and that's taxes and the Grim Reaper.

And in a time of economic turmoil you don't want your family having to cope with your tangled estate if you drop off the twig and don't leave a will.

Those of us who have come across the chaos which can happen when someone dies intestate invariably have some awful tales to tell of 'what went to whom' – and why.

Intestacy

With intestacy rules having changed recently, the picture is likely to become even more confusing, says Chatham-based law firm Stephens & Son.

Although people who inherit under the rules have not changed, the amounts involved have.

If you are married with children, the first £250,000 of your estate will now go to your surviving spouse, with the rest divided among your children.

However, the picture gets much more complex if you don't have a spouse or civil partner, or children – as surviving parents and siblings are then brought into the equation.

Ultimately, half-brothers and sisters and cousins can fall into the frame if there is no closer next of kin.

Stephens solicitor Caroline Brooks-Johnson

■ BY TONY PATEY

said: "Too many people still think that it doesn't matter to them what happens to their estate once they are dead and gone.

"In reality, it can be a costly and time-consuming process for surviving relatives to deal with intestacy and all too often it leads to family disputes and bitter arguments.

"Making a will and keeping it up-to-date is the only sure-fire way of ensuring your legacy is left to those whom you want to inherit.

"Long-lost cousins that you fell out with more than 20 years ago often emerge from the woodwork when there's no will to be found.

"If you die without a valid will your estate will be administered in accordance with the intestacy rules.

"This is a statutory 'pecking order' which dictates who gets what from your estate and who is entitled to administer that estate.

"By their very nature the intestacy rules must be general and it therefore stands to reason that they will not be suitable for everyone."

Wills can be used to encompass not only who you would like to administer your estate upon your death and to list your beneficiaries, but also to appoint guardians of children under 18, make personal gifts (of jewellery, for example), set out your funeral wishes, incorporate tax saving measures and deal with a whole host of business and family matters.



BLACK AND WHITE: Making a will and keeping it up-to-date is the only way of ensuring your legacy is left to who you want

Essential guide to where you can save

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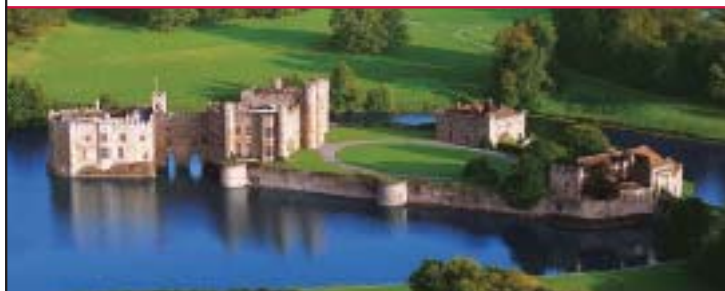
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Family Fun Weekend with Jousting	19 – 20 September

† Admission to the trials is free but a valid 'Key to the Castle' ticket is required to gain entry to the castle and attractions.

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Keep things sweet and safe at work

By **TONY PATEY**

IN recession business can't afford to trip up – literally.

So Canterbury chocolate shop, Madame Oiseau, has teamed up with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to showcase good practice as part of an anti-slips, trips and falls campaign.

Kent's HSE principal inspector, Mike Walters, said the food manufacturing sector is one of the high risk areas of work.

The new Shattered Lives campaign aims to cut the number of slips, trips and falls in the workplace. Last year in Kent, 1,107 people suffered an injury because of these at work.

Madame Oiseau has a flawless health and safety record since setting up shop in 2005. To protect staff, the shop takes simple measures to clear up any spills immediately and keeps work areas clean and tidy.

The shop is a member of Produced in Kent, an organisation promoting local businesses and raising awareness of local food produce available to Kent's residents.

Mr Walters said: "It is good to see that a small business has put in place simple measures to help prevent this type of accident.

"Workers at Madame Oiseau have adopted the 'see it, sort it' approach. If someone sees a spillage on the floor, they clear it up.



HEALTH AND SAFETY: Madame Oiseau has teamed up with the Health and Safety Executive to promote safety at work; and (below) chocolates from the shop

"This is a common-sense approach to a serious health and safety issue."

Sandrine May, owner of Madame Oiseau, said: "We are pleased to support this HSE campaign to encourage workplace safety.

"We are proud of our health and safety record and wish for other small businesses like ours to take note of the statistics and advice to ensure their staff are also safe at work."

Fatalities and serious injuries arising from slips, trips and fall incidents cost the South East around £78,615,000 last year.

Three people died and 1,830 suffered major injury as a result of a slip, trip or fall from height in workplaces in the region last year.

A further 3,473 sustained injuries that kept them off work for three days or more.



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Keep good credit in tough times with these top tips

WITH the economy in decline, businesses should be concentrating on getting back to basics and revisiting well known and established ways of doing business successfully and economically.

Follow these top tips to help your business through the current challenges and make them standard practice in future:

Terms and conditions of business

- Review your existing terms and conditions to ensure your business is adequately protected, alternatively put fresh terms and conditions in place.

- Ensure the 'battle of the forms' is won, impose your terms and conditions at each stage of the contract formation process, especially when providing samples and quotes.

- In the event that delivered goods are not paid for, ensure they remain your property by including a 'retention of title' clause within your terms and conditions.

- Agree to the terms of payment before orders are placed, including both the time for payment and the right to charge for interest in the event of late or non payment. You have the option to charge interest for late payment of invoices either under the terms of the contract or under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998.

- Effective terms and conditions could save your business from becoming engaged in costly litigation.

By **KERRY POOLE**
and **MARIE THERESE**

Receiving payment on time

- Issue clear and accurate invoices on time and always follow them up.

- Offer as many methods of payment as you can.

- Send letters at predetermined intervals which ask for written confirmation of satisfactory delivery of the goods/services, indicate the amount outstanding, and demand payment in accordance with your terms.

- If you state that you will be instructing solicitors if payment is not received, make sure you do so and promptly. Your credibility is key to you getting paid.

- Record the date and outcome of all contact made with the debtor.

- Be proactive and chase late payments, late payments and bad debts lead to liquidity and cash-flow problems, and may even force a business into insolvency.

Good credit control

- Know your debtor – do credit checks, stick to credit limits and monitor the behaviour of your debtors.

- If you are having difficulty in recovering what is owed to you, seek assistance quickly.

- When dealing with outstanding payments decide whether it is worth a fight.

- Consider your customer and, if they are key to your business, approach it diplomatically.

- Listen to your debtor and, if there is a com-

plaint, be objective and resolve it.

- If you decide to instruct debt collectors ensure you make checks before using an agency.

- Find out what methods the agency uses. Maintaining business relationships and a good reputation are as important to your business as getting paid. Remember that unlawful methods such as harassment could lead to you being liable and can constitute a criminal offence.

- Avoid the last resort. Explain what steps you intend to take and try to reach an agreement. Recovery without legal proceedings is invariably the most desirable option.

- Always try to have a meaningful dialogue with your customer to find out why the debt has not been paid. If possible, consider offering instalments as a payment option. If you have a good system for dealing with debtors, paying someone else to collect your debts will hopefully be a rarely used last resort.

- Managing credit and cash flow in tougher economic conditions is as important, if not more, as obtaining sales.

- Make sure you take the time to deal with this critical issue.

- Lastly, make sure the payment terms you agree with your suppliers match, as far as possible, your own cash-flow forecasts. If your suppliers are reducing the credit period available to you then you will need to try to do the same with your customers.

- *Kerry Poole and Marie Therese, are solicitors in the corporate and commercial department at Thomson Snell & Passmore which has offices in Tunbridge Wells and Greenhithe.*

To see this clip, search 'driving habits'

@ yourkenttv.co.uk



Julie Maddocks looks at how changing your driving habits could have a big effect on your pocket at the petrol pump

Essential guide to where you can save

■ H&H Flooring in Deal is offering an extra 10 per cent off all carpets

■ Avalone Flooring Ltd in Strood is offering 10 per cent off decorative flooring

■ Avinco Limited aerial and satellite store in Ramsgate is offering 15 per cent off aerial installation

■ GC Stevens & Son, garden machinery and woodstoves store in Sittingbourne is offering £10 off Honda mower servicing and £20 off Honda and Husqvarna ride-on mower servicing

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Drain 12mm @ 30" high

Julie Maddocks discovers how charity shops let you make a fashion statement and save cash

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Living Out log cabin store in Chestfield, Maidstone is offering 15 per cent off plus free delivery on all DIY log cabins

■ County Garage Motors in Herne Bay is offering free protection pack worth up to £400. Free full tank of fuel, free Gard X Paint and interior protection, free front and rear mats, on all new or used vehicles

■ Wells Clinic in Ashford is offering £50 off skin lifting and tightening lines and wrinkle treatments. Wrinkle reduction (b/tox)

■ Baileys Nissan in Canterbury is offering 15 per cent off all servicing

To get these offers go to:

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

Drivers weigh poor savings returns against cutting bills

BY STEVE LOADER

WITH savings accounts currently delivering such poor interest, many people see trading in a 'gas guzzler' for a cheaper and more economical model as a better return on their investment.

And there is also some 'green'

kudos to be had. The Government is using escalating road tax or VED (vehicle excise duty) to drive people into smaller and cleaner cars too.

A new scale of zero to £405/year came into force on April 1 (see later story) and is set to become tougher. By 2010, gas guzzling limos or 4x4s may face £950 road tax in the first year, although anyone spending £50-100,000 on a car is unlikely to be put off by such a paltry sum.

As a result, some manufacturers have produced models that are actually exempt from VED by

sneaking below the 100g/km CO2 emissions mark and into band-A.

Most manufacturers also now have an 'Eco' sub-branding for their lowest emission models – Vauxhall uses the ecoFLEX sub-branding.

Brilliant as they are, 'eco' models often cost more since they have diesel engines and special 'green' features that do not yet deliver the economy of scale savings available to makers across the whole model range.

What is more, saving road tax is not such a great incentive when many conventional superminis sit in the lowest road tax band of £35 a year anyway; over three years with an eco model, saving £105 is irrelevant if you spend far more on buying that car in the first place and are then putting expensive diesel in the tank.

So, check out conventional equivalents of eco models and don't dismiss petrol power; that fuel is still cheaper and makes sense for lower mileage users, while emission and consumption levels are closing the gap on diesel equivalents.

Diesel engines also tend to be heavier, so you could find yourself going through tyres more quickly.

Don't ignore alternative power options either, such as liquid petroleum gas (LPG) or hybrids.

Finally, just look again at what you have to part-exchange; you might have lost a packet in depreciation on that big 4x4, but work out what it will cost you to run it for the next three years – it might be a lot less than the cost of chopping it for a new car.



TREND: Government road tax as well as fuel costs is powering the downsizing trend favouring small cars like the lighter and greener Mazda2 supermini

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Fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for Soul range: Extra urban: 61.4 (4.6) - 48.7 (5.8); Combined: 54.3 (5.2) - 42.8 (6.6); Urban: 44.8 (6.3) - 35.3 (8.0). CO2 emissions: 137 - 156 g/km. Model shown Soul Shaker @ £12,495 On The Road (OTR). Price includes VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months VED and vehicle first registration fee. Pictures for illustration purposes only. Finance is available subject to status to UK residents over 18. Guarantees/indemnities may be required. This product is marketed by Kia Financial Services, a division of Kia Motors (UK). On the road (OTR) prices include VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months Government Vehicle Excise Duty and vehicle first registration fee. Terms and conditions apply.



KIA SOUL
A NEW SHAPE



BY **STEVE LOADER**

SAVE money by downsizing and running a cheaper car and then gain even more by smarter driving and journey planning.

For a start, you can save pounds and wear and tear on the car by avoiding short journeys and perhaps get fitter too by walking or cycling; a cold engine can produce 60 per cent more pollution than a warm one and a car used for many short journeys needs extra servicing and wears its engine out faster.

More fuel is wasted and higher emissions are also generated from a cold start – traffic on UK roads contributes 26 per cent of the nation's total carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂).

However, if your car journey is a must then follow these tips from the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) and RAC Foundation motoring watchdogs:

- Plan your route – forethought can save wear and tear on car and driver. Try to take the most direct route – a sat nav can help – and go off peak if possible. If you have to commute, think about car sharing, 'Park and Ride' bus schemes or other public transport.

- Have your vehicle serviced regularly to maintain efficiency and economy. Under-serviced engines reduce fuel economy by ten per cent or more. Catalytic converters are environmentally friendly, but only when properly maintained.

- Check tyres – under-inflated tyres need replacing more often (itself an environmental problem), are dangerous and waste fuel. Anybody who has cycled on 'flabby' tyres knows what extra effort is involved, so check pressures weekly.

- Obey speed limits to save money and stay legal. Try to 'feather' the throttle as you reach cruising speed; 56mph uses 25 per cent less fuel than 70mph and a smoother driving style will save fuel, but never coast in neutral or with clutch pedal depressed to save fuel – vehicle control must not be compromised.



TOP TIPS: Adopt our driving advice to save money and also think about downsizing to city cars like the Chevrolet Matiz (above) or the forthcoming Nissan Pixo (right)

Clever driving is key to cheaper motoring



- Accelerate briskly without racing the engine – pulling away too fast uses up to 60 per cent more fuel. Intelligent gearchanges at modest engine speeds can cut fuel consumption by up to 15 per cent.

- Reduce drag – remove roof racks and carriers when not in use. Driving with windows open also mars aerodynamics and lowers fuel economy. Remove unnecessary and heavy boot luggage and avoid heavy accessories and wide tyres that add rolling resistance. Air conditioning lowers fuel economy so use the fan and vents unassisted as much as possible.

- Buy green fuel and use less. Seek out low sulphur diesel (City diesel) or cleaner petrol (low sulphur/aromatics) supplies locally. Consider a conversion to LPG (liquid petroleum gas), which is half the price of petrol, generates almost as much power and emits much less CO₂.

- Use 'accelerator sense'. Do you go straight from accelerator to the brake? You save fuel if you plan ahead and, rather than have to brake as you hit traffic, gently let the speed of the vehicle bring you to a halt as you join a queue. There is no point in rushing and then having

to brake suddenly.

- Reverse in when you park. When you start off again, the engine is cold and inefficient. If you can drive away smoothly without having to reverse, you save fuel and have better visibility.

- Be a tank miser. Why fill the tank to the brim and carry more weight than is necessary?

- If you are stuck in a jam then you are doing zero mpg – turn off the engine after two minutes to save fuel and emissions.

For more eco driving tips see Julie Maddocks' online video report at:
<http://www.yourkenttv.co.uk/community>.

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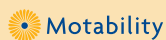
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Cars shown for illustration purposes only. Finance subject to status. *£35 road fund licence applies to Matiz 0.8 S. 1167.3mpg applies to Matiz 0.8 S. Chevrolet range fuel consumption in mpg (L/100 km), urban 40.9 (6.9) to 26.4 (10.7), extra urban 67.3 (4.2) to 38.7 (7.3), combined 54.3 (5.2) to 32.8 (8.6) the official CO₂ emission is 119 to 225 g/km.

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Is diesel demand peaking?

By **STEVE LOADER**

DIESEL has become the fuel of choice recently as UK buyers seek to cut costs, but do the sums still add up?

Its original appeal was the cheapness of the fuel, greater mpg and the better low down pulling power of the engines and their ability to meet tighter emissions legislation.

However, diesel now commands an increasing premium against petrol and there are doubts whether the engines can continue to meet ever tougher emission laws.

Meanwhile, petrol power has hit back with smaller, lighter and cleaner engines with turbocharging for extra flexibility, while there are other options emerging to save money and the planet:

• **HYBRID**

These partner conventional engines with electric units, but two powerplants and power supplies – fuel tank plus batteries – mean extra weight, while production complexity raises prices so buyers must cover many miles to balance this. Motorway mpg is also hardly better than a standard car.

• **LPG**

Liquid petroleum gas (LPG) seems an excellent alternative fuel due to lower duty and emissions and cheaper car tax.

However, the calorific value and consequent mpg is slightly lower than petrol and it will cost at least £1,500 to convert an existing vehicle via an approved LPG Association operator.

There are many more LPG filling points

across the country than before though – Kent has some 40 LPG sites – and LPG costs about half that of petrol and diesel at the pump, emits about 20 per cent less CO₂ than petrol and slightly less than diesel and with fewer NO_x and particulates.

• **ELECTRIC**

These should be cheap to run, but battery technology cannot yet guarantee ranges to

satisfy many would-be owners. There is the worry too that the car's emissions are simply transferred from an exhaust pipe to the chimney of a fossil fuel-burning power station.

• **BIOFUELS**

Fuel derived partly from vegetable matter

appeals since plants absorb CO₂ during growth and simply release it again when burned – a virtuous circle. Most road fuels sold in the UK will contain at least five per cent biofuel by next year anyway, but there is concern that using arable land or forest to grow 'biofuel' plants will strain global food supplies.



TAX TIP: Diesel ecoFLEX versions of the Vauxhall Corsa qualify for the lowest payable road tax (£35) and return more than 60mpg on average

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The official fuel consumption figures in mpg (l/100km) for the Mazda range: Urban 18.0 (15.7) – 55.4 (5.1), Extra Urban 31.0 (9.1) – 80.7 (3.5), Combined 24.6 (11.5) – 68.9 (4.3). CO₂ emissions (g/km) 107 – 299.

Retail sales only. Subject to availability at participating dealers only on vehicles registered between 01 April 2009 and 30 June 2009. *0% finance available on Mazda Hire Purchase and Mazda Personal Contract Purchase on all Mazda 2, Mazda3, Mazda5, Mazda6, Mazda RX8, Mazda MX-5 and New Mazda3. Finance subject to status. Terms and conditions apply. Applicants must be 18 or over. Guarantees/Indemnities may be required. Mazda Financial Services RH1 1SR. Models shown: Mazda3 2.0 5dr Sport. OTR price £16,257. Mazda6 2.5 5dr Sport. OTR price £19,326. Mazda MX-5 Roadster Coupe 2.0i Sport. OTR price £20,657. All models shown (excluding Mazda RX-8 R3) feature optional metallic/mica paint (£385). On the road prices include 15% VAT, number plates, delivery, 12 months' road fund licence, 1st registration fee, 3 year or 60,000 mile warranty and 3 years' European Roadside Assistance. Details correct at time of going to print. All models now available with free 7 day drive away insurance.

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A smoking exhaust can really damage your motoring wealth

By **STEVE LOADER**

GOVERNMENT efforts to use road tax to beat drivers into giving up so-called gas guzzlers have met with mixed success.

There can be no doubt that escalating tax or vehicle excise duty (VED) over the past couple of years has helped fuel downsizing, but there was outcry after the March 2008 Budget at 'draconian' rates to be applied to larger cars, especially with the recession looming.

Consequently, Chancellor Alistair Darling

backtracked last November and proposed amended charges from April 1, 2009 to soften the blow at the top end of the market, though the Government says VED will continue to be amended in future to maintain downward force in vehicle sizes and emissions.

They will also continue to be based on CO2 emissions rather than fuel consumption and apply only to cars registered after March 1, 2001; inconsistent emissions data on older cars means these are taxed simply at £120/year if the engine is 1,549cc or less and then £185 if it is above – something of a bargain for the owners of large older 'gas guzzlers' if they are content to bear higher fuel bills, opt for a £1,500-2,000 LPG (liquid petroleum gas)

conversion or cover relatively few miles.

The new rates are weighted even more in favour of the latest, cleanest and most miserly small cars.

Models emitting 100g/km of CO2 or less like the new Ford Fiesta ECONetic, for instance, continue to qualify for Band A or zero rating.

The payable steps are:

Bands B and C (101-120g/km) – £35
Bands D and E (121-140g/km) – £120
Band F (141-150g/km) – £125
Band G (151-160g/km) – £150
Bands H and I (161-180g/km) – £175
Bands J and K (181-225g/km) – £215
Band L (226-255g/km) – £405
Band M (255g/km plus) – £405



GREENER IS CHEAPER: All Hyundai i10 city cars (above left) qualify for the lowest road tax band (£35) and also come with a five-year warranty; and the low emissions of Skoda Fabia Greenline (above right) also attract only £35-a-year in road tax bills

To see this clip, search 'recycling' @ yourkenttv.co.uk



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Julie Maddocks discovers how recycling can be not only good for the environment – but save you money

Essential guide to where you can save

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■ A&A Gliderobes in Canterbury is offering up to £100 off

■ Avinco Limited in Ramsgate is offering free consultation on digital TV

■ KOS is offering goose down surround pillows from only £24.99 inc p&p, save up to £125 on RRP

■ KOS is offering a Snugfit mattress topper from slumberdown from only £69.99 save up to £40. Various sizes available

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Model shown is Fabia GreenLine 1.4 TDI PD 80bhp DPF at £10,253.04 RRP. Official fuel consumption in mpg (litres/100km) for the Fabia GreenLine: Urban 53.3 (5.3), *Extra-urban 83.1 (3.4), Combined 68.9 (4.1). CO₂ emissions for the Fabia GreenLine 109g/km. Reduction applied to the RRP including factory fitted optional extras and is the equivalent of VAT at 15%. VAT is applicable and will be shown on the customer's invoice. Excludes Channel Islands. Offer subject to availability and may be amended or withdrawn at any time. Please see retailer for full terms and conditions.

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We take a look at how a school in Maidstone has introduced banking to show pupils how to manage money

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■ Colgate Garage doors in Canterbury is offering 15 per cent off some garage doors

■ KOS is offering ultra-slim Danish Skagen watches for men and women only £69.99 saving £20 on the RRP

■ Maidstone Kia Motors in Maidstone is offering 10 per cent off all accessories

■ Aquasphere bathrooms store in Swalecliff is offering an accessories pack worth £100 with every new bathroom

To get these offers go to:

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS



Tap into a way your firm could be saving money

By **TONY PATEY**

CASH-strapped businesses could be literally pouring money down the drain – by not taking simple steps to turn off the tap of water waste.

Sustainable business expert Envirowise is calling on businesses in the South East to take on board low-cost initiatives to reduce water consumption which it says could help save thousands of pounds every year.

With reports predicting water is set to become an increasingly scarce and expensive resource, and that UK businesses are using enough of it every year to fill 2.6 million Olympic-sized swimming pools, it says local businesses could be pouring money down the drain.

To make it easy for businesses to introduce water-saving measures, Envirowise has launched a new step-by-step online tool that helps companies identify where and how water is used and treated, the costs involved, and practical ways to reduce and re-use it.

The tool also helps organisations keep control of costs and future proof against rate rises and supply shortages.

Last year Envirowise ran Rippleffect, a free initiative designed to help businesses tackle water use.

Around 500 businesses signed up for the scheme and it is hoped many more will benefit from water savings by using the new tool.

Holly Firmin, South East regional manager,

said: "While many of us consider water to be a cheap and endless resource, the reality is that we are using and wasting far too much, and this is placing extra pressure on existing supplies as well as impacting on the bottom line."

"It is crucial that people are aware of the serious and complex issues around water supply and use and we hope our new tool will help businesses address these challenges in the most effective way."

For details about the scheme visit www.envirowise.gov.uk/water.

Envirowise is a government-funded programme which aims to put sustainable use of resources at the top of the UK business agenda.

Since it has helped UK businesses save over £1 billion by helping them reduce their environmental footprints.

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By JEREMY GATES

THERE are probably two reasons why the annual pension of around £700,000 awarded to Sir Fred Goodwin, as he sidesteps the wreckage of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), is arousing such fury.

The first is that much of his cash could come from taxpayers, possibly for decades, because RBS pension schemes worldwide already face a near £2 billion deficit. RBS non-contributory pensions are fully guaranteed by the firm.

The second, is that while Goodwin hits the jackpot, some seven million workers in money purchase defined contribution (DC) pensions are seeing their retirement income slashed by the credit crunch, despite years of saving.

Private

Financial advisor Hargreaves Lansdown thinks the average employee saving £150 per month would take 209 years, allowing for investment growth and inflation, to match Sir Fred's pension pot, which RBS accrued for him since 1998. Meanwhile, those in DC schemes have seen their likely pension income slashed 20-25 per cent in the past 18 months.

Over-55s, in particular, feel powerless as markets slide because a full recovery before they retire is unlikely. How long will it take to recoup £50bn worth of share values in London one day this week?

To have any hope of a decent payout, workers must stick with pension saving through thick and thin. The eventual payout might be healthier than they fear – or expect.

Even Sir Fred needed a bit of luck at the end: if RBS had gone bust, he would have got a maximum pension of £27,000 a year. Those who make no private pension arrangements miss out particularly badly, if their employer is willing to pay into a pension on their behalf. Besides the boss's contribution, pensions are helped to grow over the years by tax relief.

Protecting your pension through the tough times

The dwindling number still in the private sector final salary pensions, mostly assume they don't have a problem. In fact, their fund may face a rising deficit, so it might be prudent for them to save more through an AVC (Additional Voluntary Contribution) scheme to boost their eventual pension income.

For others outside final salary schemes, an obvious vehicle for extra saving is a SIPP (Self-Invested Personal Pension), a concept devised in the early 90s. Many self-employed workers use a SIPP as their main pension plan.

Laith Khalaf, pension analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown (HL) says a "Bed and SIPP" enables savers to switch unwanted shares into a SIPP, with generous tax relief on top.

"HL figures suggest there are as many as 10 million private shareholders, many with shares from demutualisations," Khalaf says.

Basic rate payers putting £1,000 worth of shares into the SIPP get an additional £250 in tax relief, while higher rate taxpayers get up to another £250 back from the taxman.

"Markets and asset values move in a cyclical direction and every 10-15 years, something bad happens. In good times, people happily put money away, and in bad times, they don't."

"We should invest on a counter-cyclical basis. The fact is that Government – regardless of party – will soon raise taxes, particularly income tax and National Insurance, to handle vast debts building up, so it is vital to use the tax shelter which pensions provide.

"At the very least, put spare money into a

pension pot, to hold it there as cash until you find an attractive investment. In pensions invested in managed funds, you might step up contributions to buy in at the lower price," Khalaf says.

Malcolm Cuthbert at financial advisor Killik & Co says some savers fatten up SIPPs either by putting in ISA money currently earning a low interest rate, or a lump sum generated by cashing in a poorly performing endowment.

He cites the example of a higher rate taxpayer at 50 moving £8,000 from an ISA into a SIPP who receives £2,000 tax relief immediately, and can claim back £2,000 through his tax return, so a net £6,000 outlay produces an extra £10,000 in the pension.

The average sum held in SIPPs is around £50,000, but Cuthbert says it is important to check each investment inside it to ensure good performance. Switching to a better performing fund might involve no charges.

State

Next, we come to the State pension: those with a full NI contribution record can count on £90.70 per week, and in many cases will collect more. From 2010, the minimum number of years' work required to qualify for a full basic State Pension falls to 30.

For a prediction on your state pension, check with the Department of Work and Pensions at 0845 300 0168 and at www.thepension-service.gov.uk. Khalaf says people may be tempted to lessen the impact of this downturn

by delaying their pension by two or three years, and living on savings or part-time work in between.

When retirement actually arrives, savers in DC pensions should use the open market option (OMO) to find the most generous annuity, instead of merely accepting the quotation from their pension provider.

Steve Hunt, at Rockingham Retirement, reckons pensioners lose £1.4bn a year by failing to do this. Figures from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) indicate that 169,000 retirees turned down an annuity offered by their pension provider in 2008 and presumably found something better elsewhere, just over a third of the total annuity market.

"Research shows that those approaching retirement can increase their income by more than 20 per cent by shopping around, compared to the default option," Hunt says.

Finally, it is worth remembering that the bleaker prospects might appear in the pension sector, the more likely it is that new products will enter the field.

Next week, Prudential launches its New Income Choice Annuity, available for clients with pension pots of at least £10,000 after tax-free cash has been taken. It will enable savers to select a starting income which can be varied over time.

If Prudential's new product catches on, rivals will respond. As the older population grows, pensioners have a bit more bargaining clout than they realise.

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO ALL OFFERS

For poorer and poorer

BY **MELANIE DEN BRINKER**

THERE have been a spate of recent headlines about highly paid people trying to renegotiate so-called 'big money' divorce settlements they can no longer afford as the bonus culture declines.

So it's not surprising divorce lawyers are seeing a marked increase in the number of previously high-earning men seeking to reduce maintenance payments to their ex-wives.

They believe that, having shared in the good times, their ex-spouses should now share in the bad.

Although orders for the payment of ongoing maintenance are variable, orders dividing capital assets have historically not, save in rare and unforeseen circumstances, been variable, even where there is a change in financial circumstances.

Where does this leave previously wealthy divorced couples whose capital assets were valued and subsequently divided shortly before the credit crunch hit, and who may now be looking at a reduction in the value of some of their assets by as much as 90 per cent?

In many cases this ill fortune will be shared between the parties.

However, often the wife will have received the bulk of the 'copper-bottomed' assets, including the former matrimonial home, while the husband retains a larger percentage of the risk-laden assets such as shares, options or even possible future bonuses.

In such cases, while the wife may be facing a fall in the value of her assets, it may be as nothing to that faced by the ex-husband.

How the recession could see divorce settlements head back to the court room



The result may be that he ends up with significantly less capital than the ex-wife.

For such ex-couples, the outcome of an application made to the Court of Appeal by Bryan Myerson, a city fund manager may have huge implications.

He has asked the Court of Appeal for leave to apply to reopen a divorce settlement finalised in March last year, whereby he was ordered to pay 43 per cent of a total £25.8 million assets to his wife.

She received £9.5m cash, while he retained most of his shares. Since the settlement, the value of his shares has plummeted by 90 per cent.

The result is Mrs Myerson will hold 105 per cent of the couple's assets, while Mr Myerson, who would have to borrow to pay the £2.5m that he still owes, will be half-a-million

pounds out of pocket rather than retaining £14.6m, as had been anticipated at the time of the settlement.

She opposes the application, with her lawyer predicting that, if allowed, it will open the floodgates to applications by many other men in a similar position.

Indeed, Jim Moore, the so called 'buy-to-let king' has already announced he will represent himself in an attempt to reopen his divorce settlement on the grounds the fall in property values has made it unaffordable.

Whether or not they are successful remains to be seen, but what is clear is that in these difficult times, divorce will increasingly be seen to be for poorer as well as for richer.

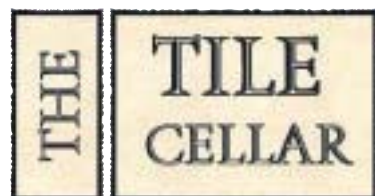
• *Melanie den Brinker is a solicitor at leading Kent solicitors Buss Murton, with offices in Tunbridge Wells, Cranbrook and Dartford.*

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Don't let the financial climate be a taxing time for your relationship

CREDIT-crunched couples can cut down their tax burden and ease the stress caused to relationships by the economic slump.

The charity Relate has highlighted financial pressures as causing potential relationship problems – but tax should not be an extra issue.

In fact, couples who work together in planning their tax affairs can save tax and so keep much-needed cash available.

These savings mainly apply to married couples and civil partnerships, to whom special rules apply, but some can also apply to unmarried couples.

The tax savings available depend on making the best use of both partners':

- annual tax allowances;
- lower and basic rate tax bands;
- exemptions on transfers of assets between them, so enabling the best use of tax losses.

Mostly the savings will reduce current liabilities, but there will be cases where refunds of tax from previous years may be claimed.

Make full use of income tax allowances. Interest returns are low at present but if only one spouse is in paid work, putting savings in the name of the other makes use of their personal allowance.

BY PAUL HODGE

This tip will remain worthwhile even when interest rates recover if the account-holder does not resume employment.

Where one spouse is the main earner, forming a company or partnership can enable the profits to be shared between both.

Again, this makes use of both personal allowances and, if the main earner expects to have assessable income of more than £43,875 in the year 2009-10, he or she will pay higher rate tax unless some of that can be transferred to the other spouse.

This can be done by:

- employing the spouse and paying him/her a reasonable wage for the work done;
- giving the spouse shares in the company and paying dividends;
- making the spouse a partner in the business.

'Bed and breakfasting', commonly by one spouse selling and the other buying shares whose value has risen, is usually done to reduce future capital gains tax by using annual exemptions.

But not all shares will be standing at a loss and many people who have sold shares before they fell to below their original cost will have made taxable gains on those shares.

If their gains are more than the annual exemption, but they have other shares that are showing a loss, bed and breakfasting the loss-making shares

can create a loss that will reduce or eliminate the CGT on gains already realised.

If one spouse is about to sell an asset and the other has already made capital losses, the asset can be transferred to the spouse with the losses before selling, so that those losses reduce the taxable capital gain.

A similar arrangement can work if a higher rate taxpayer

is about to cash in an insurance policy.

Chargeable event gains are liable to higher rates but if the policy is first transferred to a spouse who does not pay higher rate tax, the tax bill can be reduced.

• Paul Hodge is a partner at accountants and business advisors Baker Tilly, which has offices in Bromley and Tunbridge Wells.



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Put yourself ahead of the game when searching for a new job

GETTING a new job these days is tough in the extreme – recent reports say anything up to 60 people are going for jobs which wouldn't even make a tiny blip on the radar in normal economic times.

So when it comes to looking for new jobs it's essential you know a little about the companies you apply to.

That would put you in pole position, at least when it comes to interviews.

By understanding a company you will be able to know more about the kind of work they do, if it suits you, whether you're the right person for the job, what qualities they're looking for in job applicants – and crucially also how you should position yourself in your CV and cover letters.

Using relevant information during the application process will show potential employers you have researched their company, understand them and are keen to work for them specifically.

Susan Yallop, a director at recruitment firm Adecco, has set out some tips on how to find background information on potential employers, helping to make the job-seeking process a lot more targeted and potentially successful.

Company websites

Company websites are a great place for you to start your research – nearly every company now has a web page, which will include information about the organisation, what they offer as a business and its aims and ethos.

BY TONY PATEY

This is the best place to start when building up your knowledge as it gives you an overall flavour of the company. Downloading company reports can offer a good insight into the direction the business is moving in; this will offer you strong background knowledge should you be offered an interview.

Get online

The internet is a great place for finding information on a company and its recent news and announcements.

While the company website may offer some information on the company, looking for its presence online with relevant newswires and national and trade publications will give you a more comprehensive impression of what it has done in the past 12 months, the direction the company appears to be moving in and how it is competing in its market.

Social networking

This is not just a way of sharing photos and chatting with friends. A number of companies use social networking for business purposes.

While some use the sites for a communal place for employees to chat and share information, there are a number of companies who have started to use these sites for recruitment purposes.

Sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter might be just the thing to help you to find information on companies and job openings while staying up to date with specific industries.

From the horse's mouth

While external sources are all useful they don't offer an inside perspective, only news that a company has released or been involved in.

If you have a friend or an acquaintance who has either worked for or in some way been involved with a company, they can be extremely valuable.

While this information source isn't essential, personal recommendations and incite offer a huge bonus as you can learn about working culture and everyday goings on at any companies that might be of interest.

If you don't ask you don't get

If you are struggling to find out about the company don't be afraid to call the main help desk and ask for company brochures or advice as to where you can find out more.

HR may even be able to supply you with a more detailed job description.

Competitors

It can be worthwhile researching the companies that compete in the same space as the organisation you are looking to work for.

It will impress the employer if you can demonstrate knowledge of the key players and offer an opinion on the industry as a whole.

Ms Yallop said: "Obviously, companies always try to give the best impression of themselves through various formats but by investigating a number of avenues you will be able to get a much clearer and rounded impression of the image and culture that each company is trying to promote and aspire to."

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Blakes Hair & Beauty in Canterbury is offering 30 per cent off all colours with full price cut and blow dry

■ Maidstone Kia in Maidstone is offering a free set of mats with any new car purchased before May 31

■ KOS is offering all seasons duck duvet, two duvets that button together from only £39.99. Save more than 50 per cent

■ Wildlife Heritage Foundation Animal Park in Ashford is offering an amazing day being close to big cats. All day dedicated guide with buffet lunch, tea/coffee for only £99

■ Pomphreys Motors in Bapchild, Sittingbourne is offering a car rental deal when you book one day you get the second free

■ Robins and Day Motors in Maidstone, Canterbury and Rochester are offering MOTs from £39.99. Service and MOT from £129.99 and seasonal checks from £19.99

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BY JEREMY GATES

IF NEW figures detailing our personal borrowings are even vaguely accurate, Gordon Brown isn't alone in convincing himself the best way out of any financial squeeze is to step up the spending.

Professional advice website Unbiased.co.uk says personal loan debt rose by over £1.6 billion to £11.4bn during 2008.

The website nominated March 25 as Debt Freedom Day –and reckons we worked for the first 83 days of the year to earn the money to service interest charges on our debts, despite the fact that credit card debt actually fell by just over £4.9bn during 2008.

"Perhaps it takes an occasion like Debt Freedom Day to illustrate just how deeply in debt we are, and it will hopefully spur people into action to tackle debts," says spokesman David Elms.

"It's a daunting task, but with interest rates at a record low, this is the time to make money work hard to ensure any debt is repaid as quickly as possible."

Many will not escape current financial difficulties: accountants KPMG predict more than 150,000 people are likely to enter into an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA), be declared bankrupt or enter into a Debt Relief Order (a new option for people with little hope of repaying debts) to be introduced on April 6, 2009.

"Falling house prices, the general downturn and increases in unemployment are starting to have an impact," says Mark Sands, KPMG's director of personal insolvency.

Our personal debt is out of control

"Whilst consumers fight to keep their jobs and homes, for those that lose both there is often little reason for someone with debts and assets not to declare themselves bankrupt."

John Fairhurst at Payplan, a free debt advice and solutions service started in the early 1990s to offer insolvency solutions to public sector workers, says in many cases people fail to realise they are in trouble until it is too late. "They often go to the wrong place for help," he says. "Typically they fix another loan to consolidate debts, and find themselves in even deeper difficulties before long."

The average Payplan client has net household income of £1,700 per month, including benefits. They are sitting on £30,000 worth of unsecured debts and after meeting all commitments, face a shortfall of about £650 per month. Around half of Payplan clients who are homeowners have paid the mortgage at some stage by credit card, and they don't tell creditors of their problems for fear of losing their credit card.

Since August, 2008, the 600-strong Payplan team in Grantham, Lincolnshire, has seen a sharp rise of owner/occupiers in trouble. Unemployment and redundancy have not yet figured largely in the cases it is handling.

DON'T RUN AWAY: Tackle debts, and now is a good time with current interest rates low

Although the group with the most problems is aged 35-45, the sector seeing the fastest rise in problems is older – in the 50-60 bracket.

The average owner-occupier in trouble has a net monthly income of £2,100 and unsecured debts of £41,000, including credit cards, personal loans, and car loans, creating a monthly deficit of about £950.

Fairhurst says they have been hit particularly hard by the clampdown on credit in 2008, and the end of easy remortgaging caused by the plunge in house prices. For many, the escape routes are cut off.

Payplan's initial strategy is to bring the household budget back into balance: creditors are requested to stop adding interest and other charges, if clients agree to pay an affordable monthly sum to each creditor.

About a third of Payplan clients agree to a repayment arrangement, with six out of seven choosing Debt Management Plans (DMPs) and the remainder opting for Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs).

Debt Relief Orders is a third, simpler option to reduce the administrative work triggered by the great debt mountain. Fairhurst believes they will be offered to people with debts below £15,000, no assets and minimal income, and little hope of paying anything off.

On payment of a £90 fee, debtors will have debts written off, and will find it extremely difficult to get credit in the future.

Some debt problems are solved informally, without using any of these vehicles. Around five to six per cent of Payplan customers take advice on making contractual repayments and handle their own financial arrangements thereafter.

Essential guide to where you can save

■ Lexterten furniture store in Westgate-on-Sea is offering £100 off Elevating TV cabinets

■ Old Sawmills furniture store in Ashford is offering 20 per cent off all showroom items

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■ Village Hotel in Maidstone is offering £5 off the carvery lunch on any Bank Holiday Monday

■ Living Out log cabin store in Chestfield, Maidstone, is offering free installation on all standard range of cabins

■ Aylesford Self Storage in Aylesford is offering three months' free storage for a year for all new document storage clients

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Credit crunch unplugs Red List Live festival

THIS global recession has to be stopped.

First it brings the world's banks to their knees, and then it goes after the housing market and sends unemployment levels rocketing.

And now the all-consuming credit crunch has hit Kent's music festivals, with Red List Live postponing this summer's inaugural event until 2010. Something needs to be done.

Red List announced the postponement on Wednesday April 1 – prompting festival fans to dismiss the news as some sort of April Fool's

■ BY SIMON ROBINSON

publicity stunt. But a spokesman soon said: "We are deeply saddened to announce that Red List has taken the tough decision to postpone our first festival until 2010.

"This is due to a number of factors, including the high risk of holding an event in the current economic climate, and the impact of increased capacity at established local festivals such as The Hop Farm.

"We took the decision at this early stage,

before final acts were booked, full promotion began, and site work undertaken in order to protect Red List Live's ability to host live events in the future.

"Red List Live still plans to hold a series of smaller events this summer, with some of the bands already booked, before returning as a festival next year as part of our five-year plan.

"All ticket holders have been fully refunded, and as a thank you for their support will be invited, free of charge to one of our upcoming events."

Fellow Kent music festival organisers said

they were shocked by Red List's postponement but said the market had become saturated in recent years.

Lounge on the Farm's Matt Gough said: "It's definitely a more competitive market than it was when we started in 2006. Outdoor events seem to be something of a fashion. But it's healthy competition. Making sure what you do is unique, interesting and fun will see you good."

Sellindge Music Festival's Ben Wells added: "The festival market has become increasingly competitive over the last few years not only in Kent, but throughout the country.

"This fact alone makes the task of selling tickets more and more difficult. Put that saturated level of public choice into the context of a global recession and there's no wonder many events are struggling."

Both festivals played down the effect Red List's cancellation will have on their ticket sales but said they were looking forward to the summer.

LOTF's Matt Gough said: "Ultimately what's happened with Red List Live is a shame as it can have a bit of a negative effect on the Kent festival scene – it certainly doesn't fill people with confidence. But I think there's an excellent offering of live music in the county this summer and I'm sure we're all in for a very enjoyable time."

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MAKE NO MISTAKE: The four-piece group rock out at Live @ Zebra Bar



KENT UNSIGNED CHART

- 1 D-FINITIVE - Space (from Tenterden)
- 2 The Suspects - He Said (from Margate)
- 3 Timothy Edwards - Escape The Season (from Maidstone)
- 4 Freefall - Pack Up Your Things (from Bromley)
- 5 Directions - Golden Light (from Maidstone)

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Hi I'm Sam, 22, looking for a relationship. I'm blonde, brown eyes, love cosy nights in and cinema, looking to share a relationship. Box 447871 **1**

WHAT'S THE SCORE?

Fun-to-be-with, blonde female, 25, 5ft2, a woman who loves football! Enjoys going out and staying in, looking for a like-minded man, to be her soulmate. Box 446494 **1**

GETTING TO KNOW YOU...

Sociable girl, 28, loves pubs, social drinks, meeting new people & more, seeks similar male, 58-62, for a lasting relationship. Box 448756 **1**

BRING ME SUNSHINE

Outgoing, fun female 28, seek outgoing, fun guy to make me laugh, share good times with. Box 882511 **1 2**

GIVE AND TAKE IN LOVE

Loving loyal female, 30, blue eyes, brown hair, seeking LTR with male 30-35, 6ft+, no baggage, in the Maidstone area. Box 448471 **1**

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Slim, blue-eyed beauty, 31, Tunbridge Wells, loving, caring, very genuine. Wanting someone to cuddle up with at night and have lots of laughs with. Box 881494 **2**

HAPPY SHOPPER!

Easgoing female, 32, enjoys shopping, football, eating out, cosy night in, WLTm loving, caring white male, 35-47, for long-term, loving relationship. No time-wasters. Box 444214 **1**

CHATHAM UP!

Pretty black female, 32, tall, loves watching football, shopping, travel, seeking tall, white, loving male, 34-47, for LTR. Chatham. Box 437778 **1**

CUDDLY FEMALE

32, 5ft9, brown hair, curvy figure, enjoys having fun and a laugh, and WLTm nice, kind gent. Box 439402 **1**

FIT FOR FUN

Petite, dark-haired girl, 33, 5ft, fit, loves badminton, cinema and more, searching for an active man, with heart and soul. Box 881047 **1**

CARING, CONSIDERATE, HOPEFULLY YOUNG

Lovely young lady, 33, 5ft8, cuddly larger build, single mum, seeking kind, caring, honest and genuine man for friendship...hopefully more. Box 450371 **1**

AND THE SPARKS WILL FLY

Bubbly lively lady, 5ft7, outgoing, 33, honest, reliable, looking for someone to get to know and see what happens. Sittingbourne. Box 449585 **1 2**

HORSES FOR COURSES...

Caring, loving, affectionate female, 30, 5'2", blonde, likes walking, horse riding, animals, seeks affectionate male, 30-40, for lasting, loving relationship. Box 384013 **1**

HAPPY DAYS!

Attractive, fun-loving female, 31, 5'4", size 12, dark hair with blonde highlights, tactile, WLTm intelligent, professional, attractive guy, for happy relationship. Tunbridge Wells. Box 308734 **1**

READY FOR ME?

Single mum from Kent, 34, 5ft4, works part time, looking for an easy-going and genuine male with gosh for friendship, more. Box 450649 **1 2**

LIVING IT

Fair-haired female, 35, 5ft, loves the gym, pubs, nights out and fine company, searching for fun bloke, for life, love and laughter. Box 881011 **1**

SOUND GOOD?

Hello I'm 35, kind, caring and non-smoking, enjoy cooking, cinema, music, dining in and out, looking for that special someone to enjoy a relationship with. Box 447595 **1**

A NEW FUTURE!

I'm Rachel, 35, medium, enjoys pubs, clubs, cosy nights in, cinema, theme parks, looking someone special to share things with. Box 448591 **1**

ON A ROLL!

Hi, I'm Alison, 36, 5ft5, single mum, loves swimming, roller skating and meeting new people, looking for a male for friendship, maybe leading to more. Box 448865 **1**

WISHFULLY YOUNG

Loving female, 37, 5ft2, brown hair, slim build, looking for honest, caring male with GSOH, for friendship, leading to more. Ashford. Box 449915 **1**

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ENTHUSIASM ENCOURAGED!

Lovely pretty big-busted lady, 39, medium build, 5ft5, lots of energy! likes the gym, reading, new experiences! seeking a nice man for potential exciting relationship! Box 446724 **1**

FULL STEAM AHEAD

Seeking genuine, sincere, honest guy who likes to have fun. I'm a friendly, 40yr old female, like cats, wind surfing, railway trips, cafes. Box 449747 **1**

THE SIMPLE THINGS...

I like reading/writing, going out, music. Seeking kind, genuine, honest chap; I'm a 40yr old woman who enjoys the simple things in life. Box 448542 **1**



YOUNG-AT-HEART

Attractive 38yr old female, dark brown hair, blue eyes, curvy physique, likes days out, music, concerts, cinema, walking, cycling, seeks loving, fun male, for friendship/relationship. Box 901893 **1 2**

ANIMAL LOVER?

Nurse, 37yrs, 2 kids, 5ft8, blonde hair, blue eyes, likes the gym, cooking, swimming, salsa dancing, looking for a kind, caring, loyal male Box 431557 **1**

A NICE BOTTLE OF WINE

Lovely, glossy brunette, 39yr old, petite, bubbly and loving, enjoys theatre, music and eating out, wtlm a professional, loving and tactile male for a relationship. Box 442551 **1 2**

SOUND GOOD?

Medium build brunette, 40, 5ft7, single mum, enjoy bowling and water-sports, looking for a tall, non-smoking, white male for a stable and affectionate relationship. Box 450658 **1**

WHERE LOVE TAKES US

Attractive woman with a great personality to go with, looking to meet a fit, tall, well-built black male, 35-55, for fun times and hopefully romance. Box 450650 **1**

NO TIES

Lonely, bored, professional Tunbridge Wells Asian lady, 40, WLTm slim, single, solvent, professional white male 40-50 for company, fun, love and laughter. Box 443573 **1**

LOOKING FOR A LOVING CHAP

Ashford-based woman looking for an honest, friendly, caring and loving man. I have two kids and enjoy the usual things in life. Box 446985 **1**

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR LOVE

37yr old female, 2 kids, slim, brown hair and eyes, 5ft2, looking for a caring, loving, honest and trusting male to be my someone special. Box 446552 **1**

HISTORIC MEETING?

Blond, 36, long mousey hair, blue eyes, interested in historical places, music, eating out, seeks kind, caring, genuine male 36-49, non-smoker, for LTR. Box 440693 **1**

LOVE TO LOVE YOU

Lovely female, 36, 5ft4, medium-large-build, blonde hair, blue eyes, own house, loves walking, going out, the usual! Seeking male for long-term/serious relationship. Box 348102 **1**

MEND A BROKEN HEART

Single mum, 37, fun-loving, been hurt in past, looking for nice, genuine guy for hopeful happiness - no time wasters! Box 908053 **1 2**

SEIZE THE DAY

Loving female, 36, 5ft4, brown hair, green eyes, likes socialising, staying in, seeks genuine male for friendship and more. Box 428666 **1**

CUTE AS CAN BE

Cute, single mum of 4, 38yrs old, Kent-based, into most things, looking for friendship or possibly romance. Box 897963 **1 2**

LIVE LIFE TO THE FULL

Good-looking brunette from Kent, 43, 5ft10, likes bowling, eating in/out etc. Looking for a good-looking guy, 35-45, with gsoh for friendship/relationship. Box 450348 **1**

AIMING HIGH

6ft blonde aerobics instructor, female, 43, seeking decent, tall, fit male for companionship, hopefully leading to a relationship in my spare time (mainly afternoons). Box 446017 **1**

SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE MOVIES!

Single mum, 43, kind and devoted, likes walks, cinema, beaches and socialising, drinks and films, seeks similar man for lasting love. Box 449586 **1**

COME ON DOWN!

Honest, bubbly female 45, long hair, slim, enjoys walking, cinema, socialising, seeks honest, friendly chap for friendship leading to more. Box 882693 **1**

SOUND GOOD?

Hi I'm Lynne 46, 5ft4, dark hair/eyes, love reading/writing, going out, astrology, cars; seeking honest, caring, outgoing guy to enjoy music, fun, friendship and more! Box 449186 **1**

LOOKING FOR LOVE

Sun-loving 48yr old woman with a second home in Lanzarote, 5ft6, fairly slim, hazel eyes, looking for a man to share fun times with. Box 450310 **1**

ARE YOU THE ONE FOR ME?

Caring, cute female, 46, petite, likes socialising, dancing, travelling, good food, seeking intelligent, loyal man 42-52 for love and LTR. Seaford. Box 444365 **1**

HAPPY GO LUCKY

Sincere, happy woman, with GSOH. I'm 5ft6, with short brown hair, brown eyes. I have lots of interests and WLTm similar guy. Box 895019 **1**

LAUGHTER, THE BEST MEDICINE

Help me write my stand-up comedy routine! I'm 49, you'll need to make me laugh out loud and understand observational comedy to make the grade. Box 892640 **1**

JUST IMAGINE

Petite, brunette, bubbly, friendly, easy-going single mum, 49, enjoys cinema, eating out, socialising, most things, WLTm genuine male, to see where life takes us! Box 893562 **1**

LAST CHANCE

Good-looking female, 50, looking for a kind, reliable and honest man, must be a moderate drinker, for companionship and romance. Box 450655 **1**

BE MY GUY

Young 50s lady, slim, 5ft4, fair hair, a smoker, loves music, going out, cooking, gardening, seeking similar loving, caring, honest male. Box 449288 **1**

HERE AND NOW

Outgoing lady, 50, enjoys walks along the beach, nights out and in with a quiet bottle of wine, seeks man to love forever. Box 449524 **1**

ENTERTAIN ME

Female, 50, medium build, blonde, quite short, seeking tall, confident, sensual guy for regular wining, dining, loving and laughter. Must be honest, genuine and loving. Box 439654 **1**

CARING & PROFESSIONAL

Female 40, 5ft4, long hair, slim build, likes eating out, the beach, travel, seeks a friendly chap, 48-55. Hastings. Box 417100 **1**

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WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS...

I'm 51, fed up with playing solitaire on the computer! Sincere and loving, enjoy many interests, looking for friendship, hopefully leading to more. Box 881711 **1**

YOU DON'T KNOW UNTIL YOU CALL...

Young looking, hard working 53yr old living in East Sussex. I am a happy, caring person with a good sense of humour. Non-smoker. Heathfield. Box 883410 **1**

MAKE IT HAPPEN

Tina, 53, 5ft2, blue eyes, enjoy spending time with my family, looking for a companion to enjoy nights out, quiet meals and fun times with. Box 450812 **1**

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

Smart petite lady, 56, 5ft4, tall, blonde hair, green eyes, likes restaurants, theatre, cinema, travel abroad; seeking happy guy with similar interests. Box 448795 **1**

A COMPANION FOR LIFE?

Blonde lady, 56, 5ft5, medium build, attractive, devoted mum, ready to start dating again and seeking male who loves travel, theatre, walks, cinema and more. Box 448449 **1**

FRIENDSHIP, MAYBE MORE?

Hi, I'm 58, 5ft7 with fair hair, medium build, love dancing and music, pubs, clubs, socialising, looking for a similar easgoing, romantic man for love. Box 450764 **1**

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WALKS ALONG THE COAST

Honest & sincere female, 58, tall, GSOH, loves country pubs, coasts, cinema, seeking a man who's a match for me with GSOH for relationship. Box 441622 **1**

HAPPY AS ME

Fun-to-be-with, happy, contented lady (60), 5ft4, I enjoy theatre, dining out, having friends round for a meal and gardening and pets. Box 882812 **1**

SOMEBODY TO LAUGH WITH...

Loving lady looking for companionship, 63, 5ft3, medium build, brown hair/eyes, loves dancing, walks and animals; seeks similar male with great SOH for lasting happiness. Box 446382 **1**

PUT SPARK INTO LIFE

Caring slim female, 64, 5ft2, like meals out, cinema, walks, gardening and golf, looking for a kind and loving companion, 60-68. Box 450581 **1**

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Smart, attractive, bubbly blonde, 72, own house, GSOH, lives on coast, enjoys most things. WLTm smart gentleman for friendship, maybe more...Gareth please call again...leave contacts! Box 438147 **1**

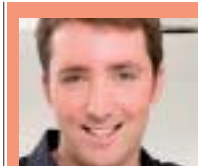
Women seeking women

LOVE TO LOVE

Easgoing female, 40, blue eyes, blonde hair, medium build, likes wining, dining, socialising, holidays, walks cinema; seeking likewise female for companionship and more. Box 448952 **1**

FRIENDSHIP HOPEFULLY MORE

Feminine woman, easgoing, caring, 45, long brown hair, blue eyes. I love music, eating out, reading/writing, drives, weekends away. WLTm boyish female. Box 848248 **1**



MEN seeking women

FOREVER AND EVER

Roland, 22, looking for a woman, 18-25, for fun, friendship and hopefully love. I'm fun to be with and have a heart of gold. Box 450586 **1**

PERFECT FOR YOU

Black male, 25, currently a student, 5ft6, attractive, likes pubs and clubs, cinema and going out for meals, looking for a like-minded girl. Box 450770 **1**

COUPLE UP

Bachelor, 28, I like music, travel, socialising, I live in Rye, and WLTm like minded woman, with similar interests. Box 450665 **1**

KEEPING IT REAL

Hi I'm Andy, 36, seeking female 18-30, blonde, blue eyes, slim, to get to know towards hopeful relationship. Box 450810 **1**

THE GOOD LIFE

Blonde male, 37, 5ft9, love golf, don't mind a beer, WLTm an open-minded male for good times, maybe a relationship. Box 450544 **1**

DOWN BY THE BEACH

Hi I'm Kevin, 37, 6ft1, medium build, loves cinema, music, walks and the sea, seeking similar girl to find love with. Box 449844 **1 2**

AIM HIGH

Straightforward guy, 37, looking for someone between 18-20, blonde, slim with blue eyes, to find love and settle down with, have a family. Box 450752 **1**

EVERYTHING I DO

Lee, driver, 36yr old, 6ft3, dark hair, like pubs, clubs, wine bars, places of interest, sports and reading, wtlm a woman for friendship and romance. Box 889720 **1 2**

MAKE ME SMILE AGAIN

Seeking genuine lady. I'm a 38yr old male, 5ft9, dark hair/blue eyes. I work hard and play hard, would like to enjoy spare time with partner. Box 449649 **1**

STICK WITH YOU

Attention 38yr old male, looking for a special lady to slowly re-discover all the finer things in life with. Box 450599 **1**

TIME'S ON OUR SIDE!

Adventurer, 38, medium build, 5ft8, love my motorbikes and cars, gigs and especially road trips! Looking for female 30-40 who's outgoing, for fun and friendship. Box 450333 **1**

A MAN OF FEW WORDS, BUT MUCH LOVE

Hi, 40yr old fun-loving male, looking to meet slim fun-loving female, looks unportant, for hopeful LTR. Many hobbies and interests! Box 450819 **1**

TLC ON OFFER

Good-looking man, 40, 5ft7, medium build, dark hair/brown eyes, like travelling, sport and adventures, looking for a girl, same interests, 20-33, for friendship/romance. Box 450613 **1**

HOP ON!

Hello there, I'm male, 40, medium/large build. I enjoy most things in life, going out, nights in, WLTm nice woman to share interests with. Box 450678 **1**

HIYA

I'm a cute and laid-back guy, 41, 5ft8, short hair, athletic, very tactile, loving and spontaneous, likes shopping, travelling

ON GENERAL RELEASE

THE BOAT THAT ROCKED (15)



Comedy from Richard Curtis about a misfit group of 1960s pirate radio DJs playing pop music to the UK's youth from a boat in the North Sea. Meanwhile, a government official wants to throw them off the air.

DRAGONBALL EVOLUTION (PG)



Live action version of the manga series, Dragonball Evolution tells the story of Goku who sets out to find Master Roshi and gather the Dragon Balls before they fall into the hands of evil Lord Piccolo.

FAST AND FURIOUS (TBC)



Vin Diesel and Paul Walker return with the latest Fast and Furious thriller: Fugitive ex-con Dom Toretto (Diesel) is forced to hook up with his old adversary, agent Brian O'Conner, to confront a shared enemy.

How petite Reese rose to meet a monster challenge

■ BY LAURA HARDING

IT would be too easy to dismiss Reese Witherspoon as another Hollywood blonde. While the Southern belle's impish looks could have guaranteed her a success in romantic comedies, Reese has chosen a more unconventional path.

From Pleasantville, about a pair of 1990s teenage siblings who are magically transported into 1950s, to her performance as June Carter Cash in the critically acclaimed Walk The Line, Reese has been drawn to unconventional roles.

Her latest challenge, voicing the part of Susan/Ginormica, a girl-turned-monster in new 3D animation Monsters vs Aliens, reflects her tendency not to fit in.

Susan is an ordinary girl planning her wedding when she is hit by a meteorite and turned into a giant. She is then dragged off to a secret government compound and has to fight evil aliens that are trying to take over the world.

Along the way Susan has to come to terms with who she is and accept and embrace the fact that she is different. As if that wasn't enough, Susan is locked in the compound with other monsters that the government doesn't know what to do with. At first she is repulsed but as the film goes on she learns to love them.

"Through the journey of the film, Susan starts to value and appreciate the monster crew for the support that they give her – the love, the companionship, the understanding that they have of the situation," Reese says.

"She has come to terms with the fact that she can't really go home again in the same way. She'll never be just Susan Murphy from Modesto.



ACTING GIANT: Hollywood's 5ft 1in Reese Witherspoon

"At first that kind of depresses her, but then, through the help of the Monsters, she realises it's a little awesome to be different. They all value each other for their qualities, and they kind of form this offbeat family."

The film's powerful message about being an outsider was partly what drew Reese to the role.

"I think it's great that this movie has a message that no matter how weird you feel you definitely have a place in this world and sometimes that can be your greatest benefit," she says.

However much she loved the script, being a giant superhero was tough for 5ft 1in Reese, who had to channel all her efforts into sounding like she could take on an evil alien.

"They kept on saying, 'Be more like Arnold

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Schwarzenegger or Sylvester Stallone, say it in that tagline way – "I am Ginormica!" and I couldn't do it, I sounded like a robot."

Reese also reveals that her two children – Ava, nine, and Deacon, five (both from her marriage to Cruel Intentions co-star Ryan Phillippe, whom she divorced in 2006) – are huge fans of the film and both had insightful interpretations of its deeper meaning.

"I was driving them home from the theatre and I said to my kids, 'So what do you guys think is the message of the movie?' And my daughter very thoughtfully said, 'I think it's a movie about never letting someone underestimate you and always living up to your true potential'. I said 'You're so astute Ava, yes that's exactly what it's about'.

MONSTERS V ALIENS

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PROPERTY NEWS

You say high council tax gives poor value

NEARLY 90 per cent of UK residents are unhappy with the services they receive in exchange for council tax, a new survey has revealed.

The poll of 4,800 homeowners and private tenants shows a third of people describing their local council as out of touch.

Eighty-six per cent of people oppose a revaluation of council tax bands.

Only seven per cent of respondents to the survey, by propertyfinder.com, expressed satisfaction with their local council and said they did not mind paying the tax.

"The average council tax has risen 74 per cent over the past ten years, while inflation has risen just under 20 per cent, but for many, services haven't improved," said Charles Wasdell, head of research at propertyfinder.com.

"Despite massive rises in council tax, people overwhelmingly feel they get poorer value for money from local council."

Rental market value is back on the move

THE rental market has begun to show signs of recovery over the past three months, according to the findaproperty rental index.

The research shows the trend of falling asking prices and rising stock has slowed in the last quarter, with rental prices falling just -0.4 per cent in March, the lowest fall for six months.

Supply also slowed, with stock rising 1.9 per cent, the lowest monthly increase since September 2008, and well below the 12 per cent high seen in other months.

Average rents for March were £827 pcm, compared with £830 pcm in February, with tenant activity reducing the average time a property is on the market by five days over the month.

Andrew Smith, head of research, said: "The UK rental market over the past year has been a story of rising supply levels outstripping tenant demand, which in turn has led to falling rental asking prices."

"There now seems to be some evidence that this downward spiral is slowing and as such we may be reaching the bottom of the market."

"Economic instability and low consumer confidence mean it is impossible to predict what will happen to the rental market over the coming months; however, we believe that there are signs that we may start to see supply levels tighten and rents begin to rise towards the end of 2009."



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Why mortgage arrears make tenants homeless

■ BY NICK AMES



INNOCENT: Tenants currently have no rights and are evicted when landlords default on mortgage payments

FOUR housing charities have launched a campaign to stop tenants being kicked on to the streets because their landlord has defaulted on mortgage payments.

Shelter, Citizens Advice, Crisis and the Chartered Institute of Housing, have teamed up to help the growing number of private tenants facing eviction through no fault of their own.

The organisations are calling for a change in the law to allow courts the power to defer repossessions to allow tenants to find other suitable accommodation.

Currently most private tenants have no legal rights, which means they can lose their home without notice.

The housing charities say they have heard of cases where tenants' belongings have been put out on the street and the locks have been changed.

Shelter chief executive Adam Sampson said: "Shelter has seen a steep rise in the number of tenants who have kept their side of the bargain by paying their rent, but who are being thrown out on to the street because their landlords have defaulted on the mortgage and the house has been repossessed."

"With more and more landlords struggling with mortgage arrears and tenants facing repossession, the Government must allow the courts to defer possession dates so that tenants can find other suitable accommodation."

Members of the joint campaign are calling for the law to be changed to give courts the discretion to take into account the circumstances of sitting tenants where an outright possession order is granted, and defer possession for a limited period of time.

The charities have written to MPs urging them to sign an Early Day Motion, calling for changes to the law.

They estimate thousands of tenants in the private rented sector could be at risk of losing their homes in this way and are warning urgent Government action is needed to avoid a potential crisis.

Sarah Webb, chief executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing, said: "Much of the Government's focus so far during this recession has been on supporting homeowners through a number of means."

"Whilst we welcome these initiatives, we are concerned that tenants in the private rented sector are being left to the mercy of market forces."

"With the worst of the recession yet to come it is important that the three million households living in the sector are afforded basic legal protection when their landlords become the latest victims of the repossession crisis."

House prices show slight increase

HOUSE prices rose for the first time since the autumn of 2007 last month. But experts are now warning there may be further falls and the crisis in the economy is not at an end.

According to the Nationwide, the price of a typical house rose by 0.9 per cent in March.

This brings the price of the average house to £150,946, the first rise since October 2007.

Fionnuala Earley, Nationwide's chief economist, said: "It would be unwise to

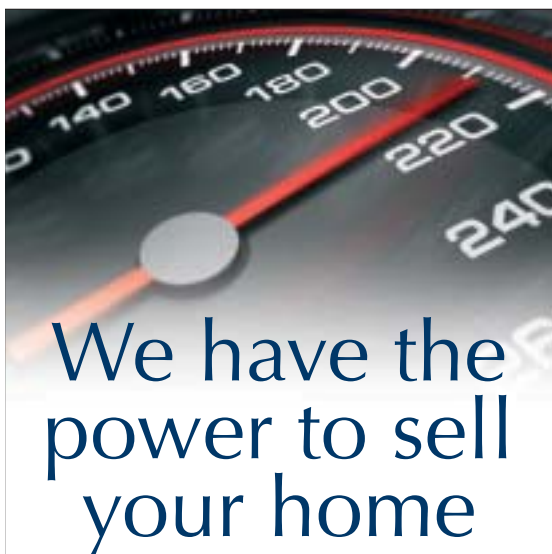
draw strong conclusions from the slow-down in the annual rate of fall."

David Smith, senior partner at Dreweatt Neate estate agents, said: "Nobody is going to pop the Champagne corks quite yet."

Mortgage approvals were up in February, after months of decline, while buyer interest in the market has also been rising.

"People are genuinely looking again, sensing now could be the opportunity of a lifetime," Mr Neate added.

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MOTORS NEWS



Kit cars look attractive proposition in recession

MANUFACTURERS of kit cars could prosper from the credit crunch, says the organiser of Easter's Kit Car Show at the Kent Showground, Detling this weekend.

John Cooke said: "Many people budgeting up to £20,000 for a weekend fun car before the recession could now shop for a good quality two-seat roadster kit car that will set them back just £8,000."

Local kit firms include Cobra lookalike (as pictured) builder, Hawk Cars (Frant), AEON (Marden), Blaze (Otham), Cranbrook Kitcars and GKD (Maidstone).



Start-stop is real boost to Fiat star's eco cred

FIAT has a new 'Start&Stop' system for the 1.2-litre junior petrol engine on its 500 cult car.

It automatically turns the engine off when the vehicle stops and the driver selects neutral, restarting when the clutch pedal is depressed for gear selection and driving away. Fiat says Start&Stop can boost economy in town from 44.1mpg to 49.6mpg and cut emissions.

This (£9,500) 500 version also comes with MP3 compatibility, air-con, 15-inch alloys and remote audio controls.



A 'redundancy-proof' deal tabled by Volvo

VOLVO reckons fear of redundancy is a major barrier to car buying now so it has added free unemployment, life, accident and sickness protection to financial deals on its C30 hatchback coupé and S40 saloon (pictured) and V50 estate, including low emission DRIVE versions.

The free Payment Protection Insurance (PPI) covers all monthly payments due on the finance agreement for up to 12 months if needed. The deal runs until June 30 this year through participating dealerships and relevant Volvo Car Finance.



LITTLE BUT LARGE: Despite compact dimensions the Mercedes A-Class feels huge inside with excellent head and legroom with a boot that can be adjusted between two heights

Spacious Merc A-Class outgrows its pigeonhole

DOWNSIZING could open up new sales for the Mercedes-Benz A-Class after a midlife makeover.

Part of the problem before was the current A-Class – launched in 2005 – being pigeon-holed with junior models from BMW 1-Series and Audi A3, while unable to match the driving appeal and cachet of these sporting hatchbacks.

On the other hand, it can look expensive (from £14,000) against mainstream small MPVs, yet the Merc is really in a 'class' of its own – a clever three or five-door holdall for buyers aiming to downsize, but keep a posh badge.

In a driving context it also delivers more than most small MPV rivals without a significant ride penalty.

The steering can lack feedback, but the A-Class is a paragon of safety and security when pushed and the latest facelift has enhanced the front end with new headlamps and bumper, plus extra brightwork for the upmarket Elegance and Avantgarde trims.

Despite compact dimensions, the A-Class feels huge inside with superb head and legroom in the back, without robbing the car of boot space. The boot can also be adjusted quick-

ROAD TEST MERCEDES A-CLASS

BY STEVE LOADER

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Green rating	★★★★★

ly between two heights to deliver a fully flat 'van' floor with extra compartment beneath when the rear seats are folded, or a deeper boot with the floor in the lower position.

The cabin feels staid, but well made, with good storage and a well-arranged dash.

Standard equipment on our smart sports trim 1.7-litre petrol Avantgarde is generous, but it has a typically hefty £17,626 price tag and spec'ing up with the desirable Luxury Package – leather seats, auto climate control, heated front seats and electrically adjustable front seats – take it to more than £19,000.

But Mercedes is generous elsewhere; our car was a new BlueEfficiency eco-friendly model that sells for around the same as a standard model – unlike the premiums charged for eco versions produced by other manufacturers.

And you start saving immediately with up to eight per cent better economy, lower emissions and lower road tax in most cases – plus a lighter conscience.

Ours is capable of an average mpg in the mid-40s and there is no discernable price to pay in terms of driving enjoyment, performance or comfort – the best way to deliver the green message.



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Credit Arrangement fee	240.00		

USED CAR LISTING

2009	MG	TF	LE 500	2 DOOR	BLUE	1,000 MILES	£15,495.00
2008	MG	TF	LE 500	2 DOOR	BLACK	4,000 MILES	£14,995.00
2005	MG	ZT	2.0 CDTI	4 DOOR	BLACK	15,000 MILES	£7,495.00
2004	ROVER	75	2.0 SE CDT EST	5 DOOR	WHITE	46,494 MILES	£6,995.00
2004	ROVER	75	2.0 SE CDTI	4 DOOR	BLUE	33,585 MILES	£6,995.00
2006	FORD	FUSION	1.6 ZETEC AUTO	5 DOOR	BLUE	2,431 MILES	£6,950.00
2006	MG	ZR	1.4	5 DOOR	BLUE	39,737 MILES	£5,995.00
2004	MG	TF	1.8	2 DOOR	GREY	27,000 MILES	£5,995.00
2006	MG	ZR	1.4	3 DOOR	SILVER	30,298 MILES	£5,750.00
2005	MG	ZR 160	1.8	5 DOOR	GREY	50,912 MILES	£5,750.00
2006	FORD	FIESTA	1.2 STYLE	3 DOOR	SILVER	15,801 MILES	£5,650.00
2004	MG	ZR	2.0 TD	5 DOOR	BLACK	50,912 MILES	£4,995.00
2004	MG	ZR	1.4	5 DOOR	BLACK	34,525 MILES	£4,995.00
2004	MG	ZT	1.8	4 DOOR	RED	33,391 MILES	£4,995.00
2002	MG	TF	1.8	2 DOOR	BLUE	47,500 MILES	£4,750.00



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USED CAR ROUND-UP: OUR PICK FROM A KEY SECTOR

BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE SUPERMINIS

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AS more people downsize their car and their fuel and road tax bills, chances are that one or all of the following popular used superminis will be on their shopping list. Year in, year out they are the UK's most consistent best-sellers – a growing trend in the current economic climate. The trio are also excellent all-rounders, but a word of warning: as second-hand car prices harden, make sure you don't pay more than it would cost to keep your old car longer or trade up to a new car.

FORD FIESTA



FORD'S hugely successful supermini has marched on with a new model launched in late 2008, but don't expect weaker used prices; the credit crunch, rising fuel prices and draconian road taxes have made the Fiesta a top target for its reliability, decent driving experience, engines to suit all pockets and three and five-door body styles. Ford has also regularly produced special and limited editions laden with extra goodies, offering plenty more choice and there is even a hot ST model.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

RENAULT CLIO



DOWNSIZING can be sensible and chic with the Clio and the most recent generations have married durability and driving fun with Gallic charm. Again, the option of three or five doors is a big selling point, but our French contender also has the bonus of excellent diesel versions, though the cost of the actual fuel versus petrol argues against it currently. The Clio design has tended to be highly practical as well as charming, with good space for rear passengers.

STAR QUALITY

Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

VAUXHALL CORSA



VAUXHALL'S Corsa was created to attack the Fiesta, yet has never quite achieved the volumes of its rival. Nevertheless, it offers similar virtues, plus a greater range of engines including a punchy and frugal three-cylinder petrol engine now in greater demand due to these straitened times. Several generations of Corsa followed a 'teardrop' body style, but the latest car is bigger and more aggressively sculpted – almost a 'supersize supermini' – with a sporty VXR version too.

STAR QUALITY


Driving appeal	★★★★★
Looks and image	★★★★★
Space	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★★
Quality	★★★★★

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06 06	NISSAN NOTE 1-6 SE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C YELLOW 15000 MILES.....	£6995
06 06	NISSAN NOTE 1-6 SE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C CAFFE LATTE 32000MILES.....	£5995
06 06	NISSAN MICRA 1-2 SE 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 22000 MILES.....	£6495

MG ROVER

03 03	ROVER 45 IMPRESSION AUTO PAS AIR/C NIGHTFIRE RED 43000 MILES.....	£3495
04 53	ROVER 25i XL 5 DR AUTO PAS BRG/BLACK LEATHER ALLOYS 15000M.....	£3995
01 51	ROVER 45 CLUB AUTO PAS AIR/C NIGHTFIRE RED 35000 MILES.....	2995

DAIHATSU

06 06	DAIHATSU CHARADE SL 5DR AUTO PAS PURPLE JUST 2000 MILES.....	£5495
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CHEVROLET

08 57	CHEVROLET MATIZ 8-0 SE AUTO PAS BLUE 5DR 13000 MILES.....	£5695
08 57	CHEVROLET LACETTI 1-6 SX AUTO AIR/C PAS BLACK 5DR 10000MILES.....	£6495
07 57	CHEVROLET TACUMA 2-0 CDX AUTO PAS AIR MET BLUE 4000 MILES.....	£5495
07 07	CHEVROLET TACUMA 2-0 CDX AUTO PAS AIR MET BLUE 4000 MILES.....	£4995
07 07	CHEVROLET MATIZ 8-0 SE AUTO PAS YELLOW 5DR 2000 MILES.....	£5495
07 56	CHEVROLET TACUMA 2-0 CDX AUTO PAS AIR MET BLUE 7000 MILES.....	£4995
06 06	CHEVROLET MATIZ 8-0 SE AUTO PAS BLUE 5DR 13000 MILES.....	£4495
06 06	CHEVROLET MATIZ 8-0 SE AUTO PAS BLUE 8000 MILES.....	£4595
06 06	CHEVROLET MATIZ 8-0 SE AUTO PAS BLACK 25000 MILES.....	£4295
06 06	CHEVROLET MATIZ 8-0 SE AUTO PAS SILVER 1000 MILES.....	£4995
06 06	CHEVROLET MATIZ 8-0 SE AUTO PAS YELLOW 15000 MILES.....	£4495
06 55	CHEVROLET KALOS 1-4 SX AUTO PAS AIR POLY SILVER 15000 MILES.....	£4995

VOLKSWAGEN

07 57	VW POLO 1-4 S 3DR AUTO PAS AIR/C ALLOYS BLACK 7000 MILES.....	£7995
07 07	VW POLO 1-4 S 5DR AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 12000 MILES.....	£8495
07 07	VW POLO 1-4 S 5DR AUTO PAS AIR/C CORNFLOWER BLUE 3000 MILES.....	£8495
06 56	VW POLO 1-4 S 3DR AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE MET 7000 MILES.....	£6995
04 04	VW POLO 1-4 TWIST AUTO PAS ALLOYS AIR/ BLACK 30000 MILES.....	£5495
99 V	VW GOLF 1-9 TURBO DIESEL SE AUTO PAS MET GREEN 53000 MILES.....	£3995

MONDEO

06 56	MONDEO 2-0 ZETEC ESTATE CAR AUTO PAS AIR BLACK 8000 MILES.....	£9995
06 06	MONDEO 2-0 LX AUTO 5 DR SALOON PAS AIR/CON KELP 9000 MILES.....	£6995
04 54	MONDEO 2-0 ZETEC ESTATE CAR AUTO PAS AIR SILVER 20000 MILES.....	£6995

ASTRA

08 57	ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C 5 DOOR ULTRA BLUE 4000 MILES.....	£7995
08 57	ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C 5 DOOR PANNACOTTA 7000 MILES.....	£7995
07 57	ASTRA 1-8 DESIGN AUTO PAS ESTATE METRO BLUE 2000 MILES.....	£8995
07 07	ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C ESTATE PANACOTTA 6000 MILES.....	£7495
07 07	ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C 5 DOOR TURQUOISE 14000 MILES.....	£6995
07 56	ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS 5 DR AIR/C STAR SILVER 17000 MILES.....	£6495
06 56	ASTRA 1-8 DESIGN 5DR AUTO SILVER LEATHER ALLOYS 24000 MILES.....	£6995
06 06	ASTRA 1-8 DESIGN AUTO PAS ALLOYS ESTATE BLACK 15000 MILES.....	£6995
06 06	ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS 5 DR AIR/C METRO BLUE 6000 MILES.....	£6495
06 06	ASTRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS 5 DR AIR/C POMMEGRANITE 12000 MILES.....	£5995
05 55	ASTRA 18 LIFE AUTO PAS 5DR HATCH ULTRA BLUE MET 150000MLS.....	£5495
05 05	ASTRA 1-8 DESIGN AUTO PAS ALLOYS ESTATE GREEN 13000 MILES.....	£5995

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07 57	NEW ZAFIRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C TURQUOISE 1000 MILES.....	£8995
07 07	MERIVA 1-6 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 6000 MILES.....	£6995
07 07	MERIVA 1-6 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 6000 MILES.....	£6995
05 55	MERIVA 1-6 LIFE AUTO PAS AIR/C SILVER 15000 MILES.....	£5995
05 54	ZAFIRA 1-8 LIFE AUTO PAS CD AIR/C DARK BLUE 12000 MILES.....	£5995

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07 57	RENAULT MODUS INITIALE 1-6 AUTO PAS LEATHER 9000 MILES.....	£9995
07 57	SCENIC 1-6 DYNAMIQUE 5DR AUTO PAS AIR GOLD 16000 MILES.....	£8995
07 07	SCENIC DYNAMIC 1-6 AUTO PAS AIR/C GREEN MET 8000 MILES.....	£7995
07 07	SCENIC GRAND DYNAMIQUE 2-0 AUTO PAS AIR/C GREY 5000MILES.....	£8995
07 07	MEGANE 1-6 DYNAMIQUE 5DR AUTO PAS AIR SILVER 16000 MILES.....	£6995
07 07	MEGANE 1-6 DYNAMIQUE 5DR AUTO PAS AIR SILVER 9000 MILES.....	£7995
06 06	RENAULT MODUS 1-6 PRIVILEGE AUTO PAS FLAME RED 7000 MILES.....	£6995
06 06	SCENIC DYNAMIC 1-6 AUTO PAS AIR/C QUARTZ GOLD 10000 MILES.....	£6495
06 06	RENAULT KANGOO 1-6 EXPRESSION BLUE PAS AUTO 4000 MILES.....	£5995
06 06	RENAULT KANGOO 1-6 EXPRESSION SILVER PAS AUTO 16000 MILES.....	£5495
06 06	SCENIC PRIVILEGE 1-6 AUTO PAS AIR/C GOLD MET 12000 MILES.....	£6995
06 55	SCENIC PRIVILEGE 1-6 AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE MET 15000 MILES.....	£6495
05 55	SCENIC DYNAMIC 1-6 AUTO PAS AIR/C ANTIQUE GREEN 17000 MILES.....	£5995
05 05	RENAULT MODUS 1-6 DYNAMIQUE AUTO PAS SILVER 13000 MILES.....	£5995

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08 08	MERCEDES A150 CLASSIC SE 5DR AUTO PAS COMET GREY4000MILES.....	£11995
07 57	MERCEDES C180 KOMP AVANTGARDE SE CUBANITE 13000 MILES.....	£16995
07 07	C180 KOMP AVANTGARDE SE 4 DR AUTO PAS SILVER 13000 MILES.....	£15995
06 56	A CLASS 160 CLASSIC SE DIESEL AUTO PAS 5DR GOLD 2000 MILES.....	£11995
06 06	C180 KOMPRESSOR ELEGANCE AUTO PAS CUBANITE 11000 MILES.....	£14995
06 06	C180 KOMPRESSOR CLASSIC AUTO PAS AIR SILVER 28000 MILES.....	£12995
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05 55	C180 KOMP ELEGANCE SE AUTO PAS SILVER LEATHER 19000 MILES.....	£13995
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04 54	A CLASS A140 SWB 5 DR AUTO PAS AIR/CON ALLOYS 49000 MILES.....	£5995
03 53	VANEO 1-6 FAMILY ESTATE AUTO PAS RED AIR/C 29000 MILES.....	£5995

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07 07	PEUGEOT 206 1-6 LOOK 5 DR AUTO PAS ONYX BLACK 2000 MILES.....	£7995
06 06	PEUGEOT 307 S AUTO PAS AIR/C BLUE METALLIC 11000 MILES.....	£6995
06 55	PEUGEOT 307 S AUTO 5 DOOR PAS BLACK 24000 MILES.....	£5995
05 55	PEUGEOT 206 1-4 S 5 3R AUTO PAS AIR/C MOONSTUD 10000 MILES.....	£6495
05 05	206 SW ESTATE QUICKSILVER AUTO PAS AIR/C GREY MET 15000MILES.....	£5495
05 05	PEUGEOT 307 SE ESTATE AUTO PAS AIR/C BRONZE 16000 MILES.....	£6995

MANUAL CARS

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06 55	Citroen C5 2.0 HDI Exclusive Met Blue Estate, Auto, Diesel	£7995
06 55	Skoda Octavia 1.9 TDI PD Ambiente, Met Grey, Estate, Auto, Diesel	£7495
05 55	Audi A4 Avant 2.0 TDI SE M/tronic Red, Estate, Auto, Diesel	£11795
05 55	Toyota Corolla Verso 2.2 D4D T-Spirit, Met Silver, 7 Seater, 5spd, Diesel	£10495
05 55	VW Golf 2.0 GT TDI DSG 140 Met Blue, 5dr, Auto, Diesel	£9995
05 55	Toyota Pruis 1.5 VVI T-Spirit, Met Bronze, 5dr, Auto	£8995
05 55	Vauxhall Zafira 2.2 Life Met Grey, 7 Seater, Auto	£6995
05 55	Vauxhall Astra 1.8 Club, Met Silver, 5dr, Auto,	£6295
05 55	Smart Fortwo Pulse 61 700cc, Black/Grey, 3dr, Auto,	£4995
05 55	Peugeot 206 1.6 HDI Sport, Red, 3dr, 5spd, Diesel	£5995
05 55	Mitsubishi Colt 1.3 Equippe, Met Blue, 5dr, Auto	£4995
05 05	VW Touran 2.0 TDI PD DSG Sport Met Blue, 7 Seater, Auto, Diesel	£10995
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05 05	VW Passat 1.9 TDI 130 Highline, Met Blue, Estate, Auto, Diesel	£7995
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05 54	Toyota Avensis 2.0 T-Spirit Met Silver, Estate, 5spd	£7,795
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04 54	VW Golf 1.9 TDI SE Met Black, 5dr, 5spd, Diesel	£7495
04 54	Fiat Panda 1.2 Eleganza, Met Grey, 5dr, 5spd,	£3995
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02 52	Rover 45 1.6 S Spirit Met Blue, 5dr, 5spd	£2495
01 Y	Mercedes E240 2.6 Avantgarde Met Silver, 4dr, Auto	£5995
00 W	Ford Galaxy 1.9 TDI Zetec Met Silver, 7 seater, 6spd, Diesel	£4995
00 W	Audi A4 2.5 TDI SE, Met Silver, Estate, Auto, Diesel	£3995
00 V	VW Golf 1.6 SE Cabriolet Met Blue, 2dr, 5spd	£3295

Commercial

06 56	Citroen Dispatch 1.9 D 815 Enterprise, White, Van, 5spd, Diesel	£5995+VAT
05 05	Renault Kangoo 1.5DCI SL17 70, White, Van, 5spd, Diesel	£3695+VAT
05 54	Ford Transit 1.8 TDDI 220 SWB, White, Van, 5spd, Diesel	£4995+VAT

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08 08	Apache RLX 320 3.0 Quad Red, Auto, Electric Start, Spare Set of Tyres	£2495
01 Y	Rover 75 1.8 Classic SE Met Black, 4dr, 5spd, PAS, MOT Taxed	£1895
00 W	Nissan Almera 1.4 Invitation Met Green, 5dr, 5spd, PAS, MOT, Taxed	£1495
00 V	Vauxhall Vectra 1.8 16v LS Met Red, 5dr, 5spd, PAS, MOT, Taxed	£1395
99 S	Ford Fiesta 1.25 LX Zetec Met Red, 5dr, 5spd, PAS, MOT, Taxed	£1495
94 M	Vauxhall Omega 2.5 TD CD Met Green, 4dr, Auto, Diesel, MOT, Taxed	£695
91 J	Ford Fiesta 1.4 Ghia Met Red, 5dr, 5spd, MOT, Taxed	£395
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MERCEDES BENZ E 220 CDI AVANT-GARDE £10,995
2003/53, 73000 Miles Silver (Black Leather), 4 dr Saloon Diesel Automatic, Air Conditioning, C/Control, Leather Upholstery, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, Remote Central Locking, Cruise Control, E/Windows, E/Mirrors, E/Seats, One Owner, FSH, Alarm, Immobiliser, New MOT & Pre-delivery inspection, 4 New 18" AMG alloys.

CHEVROLET KALOS SE 1.2i	£4,995
2007/57, Grey Metallic (Charcoal Trim) 5 door Hatchback AC, PAS, ABS, Alloy Wheels, 21000 Miles.	
CHRYSLER GRAND VOYAGER 2.8 CRD LX	£9,995
2006/56, Blue Metallic (Grey Leather) 5 door MPV Automatic, Climate Control, 46000 Miles.	
FORD STREETKA 1.6i ICE ROADSTER	£6,995
2006/06, Metallic Ice (Black Leather) 3 door Convertible, Alloy wheels, Sports seats, Insurance Group:7, 28000 Miles.	
FORD MONDEO 2.0TDCI 115 ZETEC	£6,495
2005/55, Metallic Black (Charcoal) 5 door Hatchback, Climate Control, Insurance Group:9, 39000 Miles.	
FORD MONDEO 2.0TDCI 115 LX	£6,295
2006/06, Machine Silver (Charcoal) 5 door Hatchback, Cruise control, Group:9., 38000 Miles.	
FORD MONDEO 2.0TDCI 115 LX	£6,295
2006/06, Metallic Tonic Blue (Charcoal) 5 door Hatchback, AC, Insurance Group:9., 39600 Miles.	
FORD MONDEO LX 2.0i AUTOMATIC	£5,495
2005/55, Silver (Charcoal) 5 door Hatchback, Climate Control, RCL, 18000 Miles.	
FORD FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE	£6,995
2007/56, 32000 Miles Metallic Silver (Grey/Black), 5 dr Hatch, Air Con, PAS, Traction control/ESP, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, R/C Locking, E/W, E/M, Tinted windows, Front fog lamps, One Owner, FSH, Alarm, Immobiliser.	
FORD FOCUS C-MAX ZETEC 2.0TDCI	£5,495
2004/04, 62000 Miles Met Blue, 5 door MPV Diesel, AC, PAS, ABS, Air Bag, Passenger Air Bag, Alloys, Rcl, E/Wins, E/Mirrors.	
FORD FOCUS 1.8i TITANIUM	£8995
2007/07, 11000 Miles Blue Metallic (Charcoal Half Leather Trim), 5 dr Hatch, C/Control, Leather Upholstery, PAS, Traction control/ESP, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, E/Windows, E/Mirrors, Computer, Auto-Wipers/head lights, dipping rear view mirror, rear parking sensors, E/folding door mirrors.	
FORD FOCUS C-MAX ZETEC 2.0TDCI	£5495
2004/04, 62000 Miles Metallic Blue (Charcoal Trim), 5 dr MPV Diesel, Air Con, PAS, Traction control/ESP, ABS, Air Bags, 6-speed gearbox, Alloy Wheels, R/Central Locking, E/Windows, E/Mirrors, New MOT & Pre-delivery inspection, Fine example.	
FORD FOCUS 1.8TDCI ZETEC CLIMATE 115PS	£7995
2007/07, 30000 Miles Black Metallic (Charcoal Sports Trim), 5 dr Hatch Diesel, Air Con, PAS, Traction control/ESP, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, R/Central Locking, E/Wins, E/Mirrors, Computer, Excellent performance with economy.	
FORD FOCUS LX 1.8TDCI	£6995
2007/07, 39000 Miles Tonic Blue (Charcoal Trim), 5 dr Hatch Diesel, Air Con, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, R/Central Locking, E/Mirrors, Computer.	
FORD FIESTA GHIA 1.4 TDCI	£8,295
2008/08, 20000 Miles Black (Grey Leather), 5 dr Hatch Diesel, Air Con, Leather Upholstery, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, R/Central Locking, E/W, E/M, One Owner.	
FORD FIESTA STYLE 1.4TDCI	£5995
2006/56, 26000 Miles Purple Metallic (Charcoal Trim), 5 dr Hatch Diesel, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, R/C Locking, E/Windows, One Owner, FSH, Alarm, Immobiliser, Balance of the Man/Fac, Warranty, £35 road fund license.	
FORD FIESTA ZETEC BLUE EDITION	£7,495
2007/57, Ocean Blue (Black/Blue) 5 door Hatchback, AC, RCL, Electric Windows, Bluetooth, 7000 Miles.	
FORD FIESTA STYLE 1.4TDCI	£5,995
2006/56, Purple Metallic (Charcoal Trim) 5 door Hatchback, RCL, 26000 Miles.	
MINI COOPER CONVERTIBLE. PEPPER-PACK.	£11,995
2006/56, White (Charcoal Sports Trim) 2 door Convertible, Silver roll-bars, parking sensors, 23000 Miles.	
MITSUBISHI COLT 1.1 C2i	£5295
2007/07, 12000 Miles Silver (Charcoal), 3 dr Hatch, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, Remote Central Locking, E/Windows, One Owner, FSH, Immobiliser, Balance of the Man/Fac, Warranty.	
NISSAN MICRA SR 1.6i SPORT	£5,795
2006/56, Silver (Black Leather) 5 door Hatchback Climate Control Alloy Wheels, RCL, 12000 Miles.	
PEUGEOT 407 SW 2.0HDI SE 136PS	£6,595
2005/55, Red Metallic (Charcoal Trim) 5 door Estate, Climate Control, Alloy Wheels, RCL, 54000 Miles.	
PEUGEOT 307 SW SE AUTO	£4,995
2003/03, Blue Metallic (Blue) 5 door Estate AC, New MOT & Pre-delivery inspection, 7-seat option, 42000 Miles.	
PEUGEOT 207 1.6HDI SPORT. 90PS	£6495
2007/56, 40000 Miles Black Metallic (Black), 3 dr Hatch Diesel, Air Con, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, R/Central Locking, E/Windows, E/Mirrors, Computer, Alarm, Immobiliser, Balance of the Man/Fac, Warranty, £35 road fund lic., low insurance group.	
PEUGEOT 206 GTI 2.0 16V	£5995
2005/55, 28000 Miles Silver (Charcoal Leather), 3 dr Hatch, C/Control, Leather Upholstery, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, R/Central Locking, E/Windows, E/Mirrors, Service History, Alarm, Immobiliser, Sports Pack.	
PEUGEOT 206 GTI DIESEL 1.6 HDI 110PS	£5,495
2004/54, 47000 Miles Blue Metallic (Charcoal Sports Trim), 3 dr Hatch, Diesel, C/C, Leather Upholstery, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, E/Windows & Mirrors, Service History, Alarm, Immobiliser, Sports Pack, New MOT & Pre-delivery inspection.	
PEUGEOT 206 SW 2.0i GTI	£3,995
2003/53, Grey Metallic (Charcoal Sports Trim) 5 door Estate Climate Control, Alloy Wheels, RCL, 35000 Miles.	
RENAULT ESPACE 1.9DCI DYNAMIQUE	£6,495
2005/54, Blue Metallic (Grey) 5 door MPV AC, New MOT & Pre-delivery inspection, remote Hi-Fi, 49000 Miles.	
TOYOTA COROLLA T2 1.4VVTi	£6,495
2007/56, Blue (Contrasting) 3 door Hatchback AC, Air Bag, RCL, CD Player, Stereo, 12000 Miles.	
VAUXHALL VECTRA SRI 1.8 V Tt 140PS	£7,695
2007/07, Silver Lightening (Grey/Black) 5 door Hatchback AC, Computer, Insurance Group:10., 22000 Miles.	
VAUXHALL VECTRA SRI 1.8 V Tt 140PS	£7,495
2007/07, Black (Grey/Black) 5 door Hatchback ABS, Computer, Insurance Group:10., 23000 Miles.	
VAUXHALL ASTRA VXR COUPE	£9,995
2006/55, 32000 Miles Silver (Black Leather), 3 dr Sports, C/C, Leather Upholstery, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, 6-speed gearbox, Alloy Wheels, Electric Windows & Mirrors, Refrigerated glove box, Auto-wipers, Parking lights, Auto-head lights, Auto dipping rear view mirror, Front fog lamps, Electric folding door mirrors, One Owner, FSH, Alarm, Immobiliser, Sports Pack, New MOT & Pre-delivery inspection, VXR body styling, Full recaro leather trim, 240ps.	
VAUXHALL ASTRA ELITE 1.8i AUTOMATIC	£8,995
2008/57, Black Metallic (Charcoal Leather) 5 door Hatchback, Immobiliser, 27000 Miles.	
VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 SXi 16V SPORTS COUPE	£8,995
2007/07, 12000 Miles Metallic Black (Charcoal Sports Trim), 3 dr Coupe, A/Con, PAS, ABS, Air Bags, Alloy Wheels, Electric Windows & Mirrors, Front fog lamps, One Owner, FSH, Alarm, Immobiliser, MP3 input, Sports Pack.	
VW PASSAT SE 2.0 TDI 140PS NEW MODEL	£8,995
2005/55, Reflex Silver (Charcoal Trim) 4 door Saloon 12 months new MOT, Alloy wheels, Anti theft system, Child locks, Insurance Group:9, 43000 Miles.	
VANS	
FORD TRANSIT CONNECT T220L TDCI LWB	£4995 + VAT
2006/06, 57000 Miles White (Grey), Van Diesel, ABS, Air Bag, Full Bulkhead, Immobiliser, One Owner, PAS, Passenger Air Bag, Ply Lined, Remote Central Locking/Alarm, Service History, Stereo, CD player, Solid rear doors, N/S, loading door, Fine example, Finance/loans available, credit and debit cards accepted.	
FORD TRANSIT CONNECT T200 75PS 1.8TDCI	£5,495+VAT
2007/07, White (Grey), Diesel, ABS, Air Bag, c/l, FSH, Immobiliser, 1 Owner, PAS, Passenger Air Bag, CD player.	
VAUXHALL COMBO 2000 1.7CDTI 16V CREW SEATS	£4,995+VAT
2005/55, 49000 Miles Silver, Van Diesel, ABS, Air Bag, A/c, Alarm, FSH, Immo, Air Bags, RCL/Alarm, CD player, Roof rack.	
VOLKSWAGEN CADDY C20 TDI 104PS	£6,995 + VAT
2005/05, 28000 Miles Cotrim. Crew Silver (Grey), Diesel, ABS, Air Bags, Air Con, Alarm, E/W, FSH, Immobiliser, PAS, R/C Locking, F/Fog lights, Dual passenger seat, Co-Trim Duoliner special edition, Twin side doors, single rear tailgate Alloys, Full carpet trim, blue tooth, ASR-traction control.	
FORD FIESTA 1.4 TDCI VAN	£4995
2006/06, 32000 Miles Silver (Grey), Van Diesel, ABS, Alarm, Electric Windows, FSH, Immobiliser, One Owner, PAS, Passenger Air Bag, Remote Central Locking/Alarm, Stereo, Metallic paint, Half-bulk head, Load liner, New model, Superb condition, Vat exempt.	

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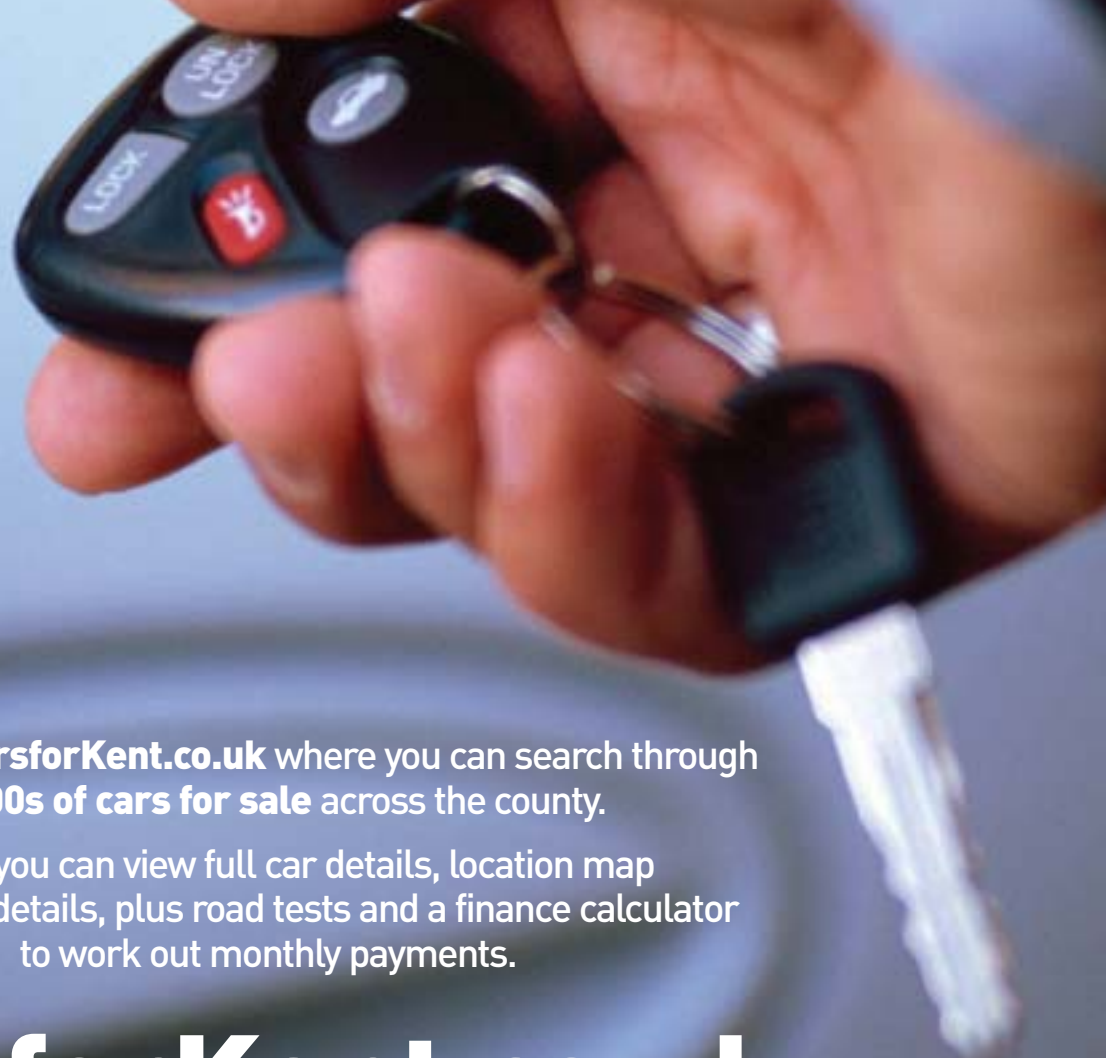
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This exciting role involves supporting and encouraging entrepreneurship, the development of micro businesses and encouraging cross border trading. French or Flemish language skills would be an advantage and the ability to travel and work flexible hours are required.

Please quote job reference: 1815

Closing date for receipt of completed application forms: 12 noon 17 April 2009

Interviews and assessment process will take place on:

Job reference 1814: 29 April 2009 Job reference 1815: 30 April 2009

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We are looking for experienced, confident, self-motivated team players who wish to gain experience within the industry to further their career.

The individual must have relevant Mac experience including knowledge of Quark, Photoshop and Illustrator. The ability to touch-type would be advantageous.

The candidate should be able to work under pressure, meet strict deadlines and be eager to work within a team environment to ensure the smooth operation of our fast-paced production department. Hours will be variable.

To apply, send a CV and covering letter to:

Personnel
KOS Media
Apple Barn
Hythe Road
Smeeth
Kent TN25 6SR
or email: personnel@kosmedia.co.uk




TEACHER OF FOOD TECHNOLOGY / TEXTILES – MPS

As a Specialist Technology College we are seeking to appoint a well-qualified, enthusiastic and energetic teacher to join this successful and developing department that is expanding into KS5 with Food Technology and Textiles. Ability to teach other design and technology subjects would be an advantage.

For further information please contact the Headteacher's P.A. Mrs. Theisen on telephone number 01622 689422 or email headteacher@st-simon-stock.kent.sch.uk You can also visit our website to download an application form and job description at www.st-simon-stock.kent.sch.uk

Closing date, Tuesday 21st April 2009 at 4pm – interviews will take place shortly afterwards.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

KOS MEDIA (PUBLISHING) LTD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Advertisements will be accepted only on the express condition that the advertiser warrants that the advertisement does not in any way contravene any existing legislation and in particular the Trade and Description Act 1968 and the Consumer Credit Act 1974.
- It is the responsibility of all advertisers to ensure that all advertising meets all forms of government legislation and KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd (the "media owner") takes no responsibility for liability in errors and omissions to the content of our media.
- All rates quoted are subject to VAT at the rate currently in force at the time the advertisement appears.
- All rates within the annual advertising agreement will be rate protected for 12 months from the first date of publication under the signed agreement.
- Any unsuitable material posted on any website belonging to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd by the advertiser or any associated third party will be removed or refused. All passwords and security supplied to the advertiser by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd in relation to the use of the posting of material via the media owner's online administration tool will be the responsibility of the advertiser. The advertiser indemnifies KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd against any damages as a result of misuse of these privileges by either the advertiser or any third party given password privileges by the advertiser.
- KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd reserves the right to change passwords intermittently to ensure the overall and ongoing security of its websites within the public domain.
- Copyright and licenses for voice-over/music/photography or film for advertising promotions or otherwise within the various forms of media in print, online and moving film owned by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must have been sought, verified or paid for by the advertiser where applicable. Approval or permissions must have been given by any potential beneficial owner voice-over or music. The advertiser must be able to verify any statements or claims (promotional or otherwise) in relation to their products/services promoted within any of the media offerings belonging to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd.
- Where shrinkage of an advertisement occurs for whatever reason, the advertisement will be charged to the nearest full centimetre where it relates to the media owner's printed publications. This will NOT apply to full-page advertisements, which remain full pages even after shrinkage.
- KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd reserves the right to omit or refuse any advertisement/commercial/web content without notice or explanation. In these terms the word "advertiser" shall be construed to include any person or organisation placing an advertisement or content of any kind.
- A guarantee of insertion cannot be given and the media owners shall not be liable for any loss or damage caused by any error inaccuracy within your marketing content. In no case shall the total liability of the media owner for any error or omission exceed the price charged by the media owners for that advertising.
- No liability is accepted for any loss or damage alleged to have arisen through delay in forwarding replies to Box numbers, however caused, nor for the loss or damage to any artwork supplied.
- Claims for any error or inaccuracy in your media messages with KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must be made in writing to the accounts department within 10 days of publishing.
- KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions made on their websites by the advertiser.
- KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd has the right to cancel the advertiser's annual membership without notice should the advertiser deliberately publish out of date material or content on any of the media owner's online digital platforms. KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd will seek to recover, in full, all outstanding invoices in relation to the signed annual membership as a result of the advertiser's negligence in this regard and reserves the right to claim damages for any potential website action via the advertiser.
- Advertisers are requested to check their advertisements after the first insertion. The media owner will not be responsible for any errors on subsequent insertions, which have not been advised to them in writing.
- A minimum of one month's notice must be given in writing for any cancellation of the signed annual advertiser's agreement. Upon cancellation, all discounts from KOS Media's standard effective media advertising rate card (July 2008-June 2009) will be recalculated and adjusted accordingly in line with KOS Media's standard media rate card (effective July 2008-June 2009) and will reflect the revised length of commitment denoted by the advertiser's written cancellation. Any surcharges, refunds or costs in relation to the production of the advertiser's TV commercial for the commitment set out within the advertiser's agreement will be met in full by the advertiser as per KOS Media's standard media advertising rate card (July 2008-June 2009). Discounts will be reapplied and any refunds or surcharges will be paid by either party within 30 days of the advertiser's written cancellation. Any other advertising placed must give a minimum of seven days' written notice and any discounts given for series bookings will be forfeited by the advertiser upon cancellation.
- Seasonal contracts. Your Professional classified advertisements or any uplift advertising within the annual contract with the advertiser will be invoiced in full - at rate card - on receipt of any written cancellation of this contract within the 12-months.
- All uplift advertisements must be booked in at least three months in advance of publication and will be subject to availability. All dates booked will be on a first-come, first-served basis.
- The advertiser must agree to the date and time of filming of any online TV advertising commercial supplied by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd within the advertiser's agreement. (Platinum, Gold, Silver standard of commercial). Should, for any reason, the advertiser not be available at the agreed time without giving sufficient notice (at least 48 hours), KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd reserves the right to charge for any further TV production at its standard published hourly rate should the advertiser still wish to use KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd's production services to complete its TV commercial or photographic imagery included in the advertiser's agreement. The advertiser will approve and accept that there are only two choices of voice-over and music: approved by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd. Should an advertiser wish to use other voice-overs or non-copyright free music, it is the responsibility of the advertiser to pay the PRS rights should they be required to do so. Any changes to or failure to approve the TV production by the deadlines agreed between both parties will result in KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd being given permission by the advertiser to replace the TV commercial with pictures or stills from a choice of photography supplied by the media owner until the advertiser can supply a TV commercial produced at their own cost and risk outside of this agreement. The advertiser also accepts and agrees that this action would not reduce the value or cost of their membership. Any cost of changes required to the TV commercial throughout the advertiser's agreement will be borne by the advertiser outside of this agreement.
- Each advertiser accepts that their ranking and position within KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd's search engine will be equal to those within their category (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze, etc) other than they will be ranked based on the search engine criteria of optimisation within their level (Platinum, Gold, Silver or Bronze).
- Any delivery claims made by the advertiser or discount vouchers published within the print or online media of KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd on any action as a result of the public or otherwise is the sole responsibility of the advertiser. Any claims resulting from this via KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must be met by the advertiser.
- a. All credit accounts due for payment shall be notified to the Advertiser by the 30th day following the date of the invoice, time to be of the essence. All sums due to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd or RBS Factoring shall be paid in full, and the Advertiser shall have no right of set off in any circumstances.
b. In the event that payment is not received by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd or RBS Factoring by the due date, the media owner shall be entitled to suspend all further advertising until payment is received and/or repudiate the contract and make any surcharges for breaking the contract.
c. In the event that payment is not received by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd by the due date, the media owner reserves the right to charge interest on all overdue balances calculated on a daily basis at the rate of two per cent above the minimum lending rate of National Westminster Bank Plc from time to time in force.
d. Notwithstanding anything in these terms and conditions or implied to the contrary, in the event of the Advertiser ceasing to use the services of KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd (for whatever reason), the whole amount of monies due from the Advertiser to the date of cessation shall fall due for immediate payment.
e. The Advertiser will be liable for all costs incurred by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd in the recovery of debts not paid by the due date.
f. Payment may be made by cheque, credit transfer, direct debit, cash and any major credit card.
- Any discount which KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd may have agreed with the Advertiser shall be forfeited in the event of failure by the Advertiser to complete the contract or to meet the above credit terms.
- Advertising Agency commission will be allowed to those advertisers recognised by the Newspaper Society, but shall not exceed ten per cent and will be subject to the terms of that recognition. This commission will not be allowed if the Advertising Agency fails to meet the terms.
- All private advertisements and certain categories as laid down by KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd must be prepaid.
- The Advertiser agrees to indemnify KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd in respect of all costs, damages or other charges falling upon the media owner or any of the companies within the KOS Media Group as the result of legal action or threatened legal action or threatened legal arising from the publication of any advertisement or advertising promotion.
- An order for an advertisement shall amount to acceptance of these terms and conditions, and any condition placed on an order by an Advertiser shall be null and void in so far as it conflicts with them.
- Copyright in advertisements produced wholly or partially by the media owners belonging to KOS Media (Publishing) Ltd. Advertisers may not reproduce such advertisements without the media owner's written consent.

All terms and conditions stated above are in place to protect the advertiser, the media owner and the communities they serve within the public domain as well as the beneficial rights of individuals and organisations. KOS Media will endeavour to always act reasonably in applying its terms and conditions.

Effective from June 2008

Apple Barn, Hythe Road, Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SR
Tel 01303 817040 Fax 01303 817004
Email: info@kosmedia.co.uk



Award winning publications
www.kentnews.co.uk

CAREERS IN HEALTHCARE ACROSS EAST KENT

NHS
Eastern and Coastal Kent

From Whitstable to Dover, Ashford to Canterbury, over 710,000 people depend on Eastern and Coastal Kent. We work hard to improve health and wellbeing, to tackle health inequalities and to provide high quality, responsive and efficient services.

As one of Kent's largest employers, we aim to have a world-class workforce. Invest your skills in us and we'll invest in you with personalised career development, flexible working, childcare, final salary pension scheme and many other valuable benefits.

Health Visitor X 2 (*) (🚗)

Ref: 767-ECL1021
Band 6: £24,831 - £33,436 per annum (pro rata for part time)
Herne Bay & Whitstable, Kent
Full Time: 37.5 Hours per week
(30 Hours would be considered)

We are looking for two dynamic, innovative, self-motivated, qualified Health Visitors to work in Herne Bay and Whitstable. You will be joining teams supported by skill mix and working towards integration with school nursing to provide a seamless service to children and families in our locality. We work within the Eastern and Coastal Kent Framework for Health Visiting, providing a progressive universal service.

If you are pro-active and keen to develop the Public Health Agenda and are also interested in developing services which respond to the needs of the community, then we would love to hear from you.

Excellent communication skills, a flexible, forward thinking approach and commitment to team working are crucial.

It is recommended that you phone the teams for an informal discussion and they will be very happy to facilitate an informal visit. Please contact the Whitstable Team on 01227 378558, the Herne Bay team on 01227 594773 or Susan Gough, Locality Clinical Co-ordinator on 01843 855487.

Some re-location expenses may be agreed as per our Relocation Policy.

A comprehensive corporate induction programme is provided at the commencement of employment.

Please ensure that you check your NHS Jobs account regularly in order to see if you have been successful in obtaining an interview.

(*) Employment in this post is subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau

(🚗) Car owner/driver essential, subject to the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

For further information and to apply, please visit
www.easternandcoastalkent.nhs.uk

Completed applications by: 17 April 2009.
Interviews to be held on: 6 May 2009 (Provisionally)

We are an equal opportunities employer
Committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults



Intervenor for Children and Young People with Multisensory Impairment/Deafblind

Starting salary £23,053, with progression through contribution related pay to £26,421 pro rata

3 x 25 hours per week

Fixed Term posts until 31st March 2011

Countywide

Work bases for each post are:

West Kent: Kings Hill, West Malling
Mid Kent: Kroner House, Ashford
East Kent: Clover House, Whitstable

This is an exciting initiative under Aiming High for Disabled Children: Better Support for Families.

This is an opportunity for practitioners experienced in working with children and young people with sensory impairment to work as intervenors with deafblind children from birth to 19 years of age.

Also working with families to develop and support individual communication modes, you will support children and young people with Multisensory Impairment (MSI)/deafblind to participate in extended services and community activities and so to enable families to experience "short breaks".

Working within the Specialist Teaching Service and in liaison with Disabled Children's Service, you will enskill service providers to communicate effectively with children and young people with MSI/deafblind and to support smooth transitions.

You should hold a suitable qualification within this field at NVQ level 3 or equivalent coupled with an additional qualification in MSI/deafblind, sign language, Braille, mobility or guide-communicator.

The 25 hours per week will be delivered flexibly to meet the needs of children, young people and their families as the post is likely to require some work in the evenings and/or weekends.

The ability to travel across a wide geographical area in a timely and flexible manner at various times of the day to meet the requirements of the service is essential.

This post is subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Application to the Criminal Records Bureau.

To apply, visit www.kent.gov.uk/jobs Alternatively, please email recruitment.line@kent.gov.uk or call 0845 8247 904. Please quote reference: CFE/09/0113.

Closing date: Midday, 21st April 2009.



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so neither are our people.

www.kent.gov.uk/jobs



Tenterden & District Age Concern Day Care Centre

Age Concern Day Centre Manager – We are looking to recruit an enthusiastic and experienced person to manage the day to day running and organisation of the Day Centre, which provides a variety of day care services for older people.

NVQ 3 in Care or equivalent qualification essential.
Previous experience of working with older people preferred.
Working hours – 35 hours per week
Annual leave 20 days plus statutory Bank Holidays.
Starting salary not less than £18,000.00 pa, depending on experience and qualifications.

Secretary/administrative support – We also require a flexible and adaptable person to work on a part-time basis offering secretarial and administrative support to the Age Concern Day Centre Manager and staff.

An ability to work with older people an advantage.
Working hours – 9.00 to 12.30pm Monday to Friday
Salary £8.00 per hour
Annual leave 20 days plus statutory Bank Holidays.

For details contact Nicky Tredway 01580 762882.
Tenterden & District Day Centre, Church Road, Tenterden. TN30 6AT

Closing date April 17th 2009

All appointments subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks.



MidKent College

MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone is seeking to appoint outstanding individuals in the following area:

Personal Tutor

Ref: P0316

(Full-time, Part-time and Fixed Term)

Salary: £20,368 - £26,255 per annum/pro rata

We currently have a number of opportunities for full-time and part-time Personal Tutors. As a Personal Tutor you will plan and deliver a full range of group tutorials to learners with a wide range of abilities. You will be able to work with minimum supervision and have experience of working in a coaching, mentoring or teaching capacity and be willing to undertake an appropriate teaching qualification. When applying, please state clearly your preferred role.

Closing date: Friday 17 April 2009

Mid-Kent College is working in partnership with RBLI Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBLI, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBLI on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website www.rbli.co.uk for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

Application forms and further details are available from www.midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the Personnel department on 01634 884402 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

Mid-Kent College is an equal opportunities employer



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Come and build an empire within our fine company.

WE ONLY EMPLOY TOP PRODUCERS.

If you were an **average** executive in 2009, you have earned so far this year your basic pay plus over **£3,000 in commission**.
If you were a **star** you would have earned the same basic plus over **£6,000 in commission**.

**YOUNG OR OLD, IF YOU HAVE GOT WHAT IT TAKES,
WE WILL KNOW!**

Contact us on: **01634 263121**



MidKent College

MidKent College based in the Medway Towns and Maidstone is seeking to appoint outstanding individuals in the following areas:

Hourly Paid Lecturers in Beauty Therapy Ref: SE001

Salary: £20.37 - £28.92 per hour

The College is currently looking to recruit dynamic and enthusiastic Lecturers in the Beauty Department to deliver high quality training and assessment procedures to full and part time learners. The applicants must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and have or be willing to work towards a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous.

Hourly Paid Lecturers in Hair Design

Ref: SE002

Salary: £20.37 - £28.92 per hour

We are looking to recruit passionate individuals to teach assess and contribute to the development of Hair Design programmes. The applicants must have a relevant vocational/academic qualification and should hold or be willing to work towards a teaching qualification. Recent industry experience would be advantageous.

Closing date: Friday 17 April 2009

Mid-Kent College is working in partnership with RBLI Employment Solutions to support individuals who have a disability or health condition in the application, interview and employment with the college. If you would like any further information regarding RBLI, or require assistance with your application process then please contact RBLI on 0800 783 1144 or visit their website www.rbli.co.uk for information, advice and guidance.

The College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of employment is subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the College procedure.

Application forms and further details are available from www.midkent.ac.uk. Alternatively, please e-mail job.applications@midkent.ac.uk. For individuals without access to e-mail or the internet please call the Personnel department on 01634 884402 (24 hour answer machine). In all communication with the College please quote the appropriate job title and reference number.

Mid-Kent College is an equal opportunities employer



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For information on these and other vacancies please call **Andy** or **Alex** on **01622 664999**



SCIENCE LABORATORY TECHNICIAN DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY TECHNICIAN

Science Laboratory Technician, 35 hours per week for 38 weeks a year (term time only).

Design & Technology Technician, part-time for 38 weeks a year (term time only).

Both salaries dependent on experience - Band 3 Kent Scheme Salaries

For further information please contact the Headteacher's P.A. Mrs. Theisen on telephone number 01622 689422 or email headteacher@st-simon-stock.kent.sch.uk. You can also visit our website to download an application form and job description at www.st-simon-stock.kent.sch.uk

Closing date, Friday 24th April 2009 at 2pm - interviews will take place shortly afterwards.

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults



JOURNALISTS REQUIRED (Freelance/Contract)

KOS Media launched its Midweek series of local newspapers 18 months ago and there are now 10 titles covering towns and districts across East and Mid Kent.

Our industry is going through change but KOS Media's successful mix of newspapers, websites and online TV offers news journalists a unique challenge.

If you think you would like to be part of a growing media company and you are experienced, able to write great copy, confident enough to take responsibility and also come up with great ideas, I'd like to hear from you.

I have freelance and contract positions which I know will suit a lot of good journalists in this county.



Award winning publications
www.kentnews.co.uk

Contact: Gary Wright,
Midweek Group Editor
on 01303 817032
or email gary.wright@kosmedia.co.uk

KOS Media, publisher of the award-winning Kent on Sunday, the Saturday Observer, and the YourLocal midweek titles and associated websites, has vacancies for

Distribution & Promotional staff

Part-time Weekends.

We require a number of staff across the county to assist in the distribution and promotion of our award winning titles.

The job will involve delivery to specific addresses, both business and residential, as well as assisting with various promotions in stores or at specific venues.

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• Please telephone Barbara or Lyndsay on 01303 817070.



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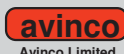
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www.masterbuildplastics.co.uk



BUSINESS BRIEFS

Reminding the over 40s of their skills

A NEW programme to help the over-40s facing the dole or already unemployed is being piloted in the county.

Called Shape Your Future, it's a free workshop taking place over two and a half days to allow people to explore self-employment as an option for the future.

Business Link's Sharon Massingham, who designed the programme, said: "Facing redundancy is frightening, particularly in the current climate, especially for those who are more mature and fear they might not find work again."

"It is important to recognise that it was the job that was lost, not you. You have the same skills, knowledge and experience you had before you were made redundant."

"It may be you are passionate about a hobby or interest that could be a potential business opportunity. Why not come along and find out if it is a possibility?"

Dates are April 27 and April 29 at Lordswood; and tomorrow (Thursday), May 19 and May 21 at Chatham.

Further workshops, including one aimed specifically at executives and professionals, will take place in Medway during May and June.

The programme is funded by the South East England Development Agency. Details on 01732 878586.

Forum says demand more from suppliers

ANYONE running a business knows that one or two suppliers and the odd client can be pains in the nether regions, but the Forum of Private Business says dealing with them has become one of the biggest headaches.

The forum, which represents many businesses in Kent, is urging small firms to save money by creating more efficient dealings with suppliers.

A survey by research and consulting agency YouGov found that 42 per cent of the owners of small businesses who responded were most anxious about dealing with difficult suppliers and clients. The same proportion said that their greatest concern was the fear of technology not working properly.

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Julie Maddocks asks: "Is small really beautiful in business?" Search 'crunch'

Trish's top tips could make the difference

■ BY TONY PATEY

TRAINING and development have shot to the forefront of business agendas as bosses realise that looking after their staff can help fight tough trading conditions.

With redundancies taking their toll, employers want to boost the morale and motivation of those still in work and training for the future is a key way of doing that.

Trish Fraser, managing director of Quality South East, the Investors in People centre for Kent, said: "Although it is generally accepted that staff development pays for itself in the long run, most companies are thinking about the short term at the moment."

"Making the case for investing in staff development has become more difficult in the past year as many organisations are focusing on efficiency and cost-cutting."

"However, those companies that look after their staff are much more likely to survive the recession."

Her top tips to help companies think about how they can develop their staff cost-effectively are:

- Prioritise training needs. Instead of cutting the budget on all training, think about what is essential for the organisation's development and which is desirable.
- Training does not have to be conducted by a specialist provider. People within an organisation that have received training are often very well equipped to deliver it and share best practice, which is also an empowering experience for employees.
- Development does not just mean training. Think about employees' roles and how their skills can be broadened through learning on the job.
- Allow employees flexible hours to pursue their own interests or to volunteer. Both can



PEOPLE MATTER: Trish Fraser, of Quality South East, says training and development of staff remains crucial

lead to ongoing development, as well as helping staff to feel appreciated, without a cost to the employer.

• Following major reorganisations, many people are being asked to cover new and expanded roles, but it is important that employees do not feel new responsibilities are being forced on them. Helping staff to feel motivated to test themselves will maintain productivity.

• Managers must help employees get to grips with new situations and challenges they are facing. Low morale and a lack of skills will ultimately impact the bottom line in so many

ways both the long and short term.

- Look at subsidised courses. Government grants are available and it is worth investigating the help that is out there.
- Online courses, whether bought in or developed in-house, can be very cost-effective. Employees can work at a time to suit them and do not have to spend days out of the office.
- Good communication is essential; encourage staff to talk to each other and share ideas. It may be that an employee has discovered an ingenious way of overcoming a problem that his or her colleagues are struggling with.



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FOOTBALL

Hotshot Barnett continues Chats' winning streak

Chatham Town 1 Redbridge 0

CHATHAM Town's hopes of a top ten finish in Ryman Division One North were boosted at the weekend as they continued their excellent run of form.

Steve Binks' side are the form side in the division having won five games on the spin and boast an unbeaten record of eight matches, with their last defeat stretching back to February 24, when they lost 2-1 at Great Wakering Rovers.

The win at Maidstone Road on Saturday came courtesy of Lee Barnett's 71st-minute strike, which makes it 16 goals for the season for the in-form striker.

In the first half, Michael Dodsworth's long-range shot induced panic in the Redbridge goalkeeper who wasn't concentrating, while the Chats dominated the second half and deserved their lead.

The Chats return to action on Saturday when they take on Northwood at Maidstone Road.

Another win for Binks' side could see them move up as far as ninth in the division. Kick-off is at 3pm.



MAN IN FORM: Barnett hit 16th goal of season

Picture: ADRIAN LANE



Picture: KETH SLAHER/KOR KUPKO

SLIPPED UP: Mark Stimson's decision to replace Andy Barcham (above) with Garry Richards was met with jeers from the crowd, while Simon Royce was powerless to prevent Gills' defeat

Furlong shows his class as Gills fail to find first gear

FOOTBALL

BY GLENN PEARSON

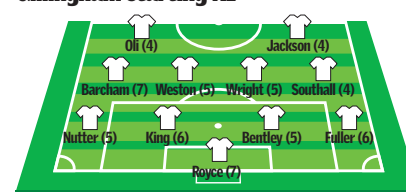
Gillingham 0

Barnet 2

Furlong 23, O'Flynn pen 54



Gillingham starting XI



Subs used: Richards (Barcham 75), Miller (Southall 67), McCammon (Oli 63)

IT was labelled a potential banana skin and sure enough Gillingham fell for the bait as they slipped up against struggling Barnet at Priestfield.

The Gills were a shadow of the side that earned a point at leaders Barnet the previous weekend, which could be attributed to Mark Stimson's changes in which Mark McCammon and Adam Miller were dropped to the bench.

Bees forward Paul Furlong rolled back the years as the 40-year-old former Chelsea player gave a centre-forward's display right out of the text book. He opened the scoring in the first half, won a penalty in the second and bullied Simon King and Mark Bentley all afternoon.

In a poor first half in which Gillingham failed to register a single shot on target, it was the visitors, battling to stay in the division, who looked the more dangerous of the two sides.

They showed their intent when Furlong managed to get a shot off on the edge of the penalty box that had Gills goalkeeper Simon Royce stranded as the ball rolled just wide of his far post.

Barnet then took the lead after 23 minutes. Leading scorer John O'Flynn was given too

much time on the edge of the Gillingham box, allowing the striker to provide an inch-perfect cross for Furlong, who beat his marker to head into the bottom corner.

It took until five minutes after the half-time interval for the home side to register any sort of strike on goal when defender John Nutter let fly with a left-foot volley that was well saved by Jake Cole.

Despairing

But the visitors made them pay four minutes later when Bentley was adjudged to have pulled Furlong down just inside the area, referee Kevin Friend showing no hesitation in pointing to the spot.

O'Flynn stepped up to net his 17th goal of the season, dispatching the ball into the top right-hand corner past Royce's despairing dive.

The Gills thought they had equalised just after the hour mark when King turned in the six-yard box and hammered an effort at goal, but Cole denied him with a brilliant reflex save.

McCammon, on for Dennis Oli, shot wide when presented with an open goal to sum up Gillingham's day, but the biggest jeer of the day came when Andy Barcham was replaced by defender Garry Richards with 15 minutes to play. It didn't go down well with Gills fans who began chanting at Stimson: 'you don't know what you're doing'.

• Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk

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Mark Stimson discusses what he feels has been turning point of the season



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Mos put Dragons to sword to reach play-off finals day

ICE HOCKEY

BY YOURMEDWAY REPORTER

Invicta Dynamos 7 Cardiff Dragons 4

Dynamos win 11-5 on aggregate

THERE was never much danger that the Dynamos would take the second leg of this play-off quarter-final for granted, even with a 4-1 lead from the first leg in the bag.

Coach Kevin Parrish had warned against the dangers of complacency following the Mos first-leg win in Wales a fortnight ago, and they shrugged off the disappointment of last week's two-legged cup final loss at the hands of Sheffield Spartans to book a place in the English National Ice Hockey League's play-off finals.

Parrish was specifically wary of the danger of conceding early goals that would allow the Welsh side back into the tie, but the visitors' plans were thrown into disarray

when two players were sent to the sidelines early on for infringements.

With just three men on the ice against Invicta's five, the Dragons found it impossible to contain the Medway side.

Martin Melichercik struck first to put Invicta 5-1 up on aggregate and the lead was increased when Anthony Leone struck the home side's second of the afternoon.

Within seconds Melichercik had made it 3-0 and 7-1 on aggregate, but the visitors then mounted an alarming revival.

Steve Fisher scored what looked like a consolation goal at the end of the first period, before a double from Tim Burrows made it 3-3 on the day.

When Brent Pope then shot Cardiff in front, Invicta's once-impregnable looking cushion was down to three goals, but they quashed any hopes of a Dragons come back with two goals in the first 30 seconds of the third period from Andy Smith and Elliot Andrews.

Smith made it 6-4 on the day and Lewis Burke completed the scoring late on.

The Dynamos face Sheffield in the National Final at Coventry on Sunday and they return to the same venue the following weekend for the play-off finals.



ON TARGET: Martin Melichercik's strike helped fire Invicta into play-off semi-finals

FOOTBALL

Scally gets radical to hurt clubs that mock the system

OUTSPOKEN Gillingham chairman Paul Scally has called for tougher punishments for clubs that go into administration, claiming they should be relegated and denied promotion for three seasons.

In a week in which Southampton's parent company went into administration, but could see the Championship side escape a ten-point deduction, Scally has hit out at clubs that are making a "mockery" of the system.

The Gills chairman has never hidden his dislike of teams being deducted points, and has instead advocated a system in which teams that opt to go into administration suffer more dire consequences.

He said: "I do not like this points deduction system and in truth it has become a bit of a mockery. If a club go into administration they should be relegated and not allowed to get promoted for three seasons. I do not have any problem with that."

"These clubs do not go into administration lightly, but it may be they have spent money on players they shouldn't have and that gives them an advantage they should not have. Rather than having points knocked off they should be relegated and only allowed to return after three seasons once they have proved to the league they have their finances in order."

Bournemouth, Rotherham and Luton have all been docked points for going into administration in League Two, while Wigan chairman Dave Whelan has claimed the debts of some Premier League sides are unsustainable and he wouldn't be surprised if one of them were to go bust.

The Gills, whose Priestfield ground is also owned by a parent company - Priestfield Developments Limited - headed by Scally, were reported to have borrowed money from the Professional Footballers' Association to help with the club's wage bill.

Scally confirmed £100,000 was borrowed, but declared that it was returned almost immediately.

"We did take a loan until the end of the season, but in the end we found that we didn't need to take it," he said. "We had money owed to us that didn't come so we took a £100,000 loan in December, but the money we were owed arrived so we were in a position to hand it back to the PFA in January."

OUTSPOKEN: Paul Scally wants heavier penalties



LEAGUE TABLES

COCA-COLA LEAGUE TWO

	P	W	D	L	Gd	Pt
1 Brentford	40	19	15	6	+23	72
2 Exeter City	41	19	11	11	+12	68
3 Bury	41	18	13	10	+15	67
4 Wycombe Wanderers	39	16	17	6	+17	65
5 Rochdale	41	18	11	12	+13	65
6 Gillingham	41	18	11	12	+1	65
7 Shrewsbury Town	41	15	16	10	+16	61
8 Bradford City	41	16	12	13	+10	60
9 Chesterfield	40	16	12	12	+9	60
10 Dagenham & Redbridge	40	15	11	14	+16	56
11 Lincoln City	40	14	13	13	+4	55
12 Darlington (-10)	40	18	10	12	+17	54
13 Morecambe	40	12	17	11	-1	53
14 Rotherham United (-17)	39	19	11	9	+19	51
15 Aldershot Town	40	13	9	18	-18	48
16 Notts County	41	10	14	17	-14	44
17 Accrington Stanley	41	11	11	19	-14	44
18 Port Vale	40	12	6	22	-19	42
19 Barnet	40	9	13	18	-19	40
20 Macclesfield Town	41	11	7	23	-31	40
21 Bournemouth (-17)	41	14	12	15	+3	37
22 Grimsby Town	41	7	13	21	-21	34
23 Chester City	41	7	12	22	-34	33
24 Luton Town (-30)	40	13	13	14	-4	22

RYMAN DIVISION ONE NORTH

1 East Thurrock Utd	38	27	5	6	+54	86
13 Enfield Town	38	15	7	16	+2	52
14 Chatham Town	38	16	4	18	-4	52
15 Leyton	37	12	11	14	+9	47
16 Maldon Town	37	12	7	18	+5	40
17 Thamesmead Town	38	9	9	20	-24	36
18 Potters Bar Town	38	9	9	20	-18	35
19 Waltham Forest	37	9	7	21	-29	34
20 Ilford	38	10	4	24	-42	34
21 Witham Town	37	5	7	25	-63	22
22 Hillingdon Borough	38	3	4	31	-67	13

KENT LEAGUE PREMIER DIVISION TABLE

1 Hythe Town	29	20	3	6	31	63
2 Holmesdale	28	18	5	5	30	59
3 Herne Bay	29	18	2	9	17	56
4 VCD Athletic	27	17	4	6	37	55
5 Faversham Town	28	17	2	9	41	53
6 Greenwich Borough	28	17	3	8	12	53
7 Erith Town	27	12	9	6	21	47
8 Croydon	27	13	4	10	19	43
9 Erith & Belvedere	27	13	4	10	11	43
10 Tunbridge Wells	29	12	5	12	1	41
11 Norton Sports	27	10	3	14	-11	33
12 Deal Town	27	8	7	12	0	31
13 Slade Green	27	9	4	14	-8	31
14 Sevenoaks Town	29	9	4	16	-17	31
15 Beckenham Town	29	8	2	19	-21	26
16 Lordswood	28	6	3	19	-29	21
17 Sporting Bengal	32	0	0	32	-134	0

FIXTURES (Saturday): Coca-Cola Football League Two: Wycombe v Gillingham; Ryman Division One North: Chatham Town v Northwood; Kent League: Lordswood v Norton Sports



HOLDING ON: Medway (right) must beat Cranbrook on Saturday if they are to win the Kent 1 title

Medway title push faltering after second defeat in a row

RUGBY

Old Gravesendians 27 Medway 3

MEDWAY'S grip on the Kent 1 title was loosened at the weekend as they experienced back-to-back defeats for the first time this season.

Taff Gwilliam's side were cruising at the top of the division for the majority of the season, having won 17 league games on the spin. Defeat to Sittingbourne last month was Medway's first since their opening day loss to Old Olavians.

The same side beat them 27-0 last weekend, making Saturday's game against second-placed Old Gravesendians even more important. However, the visitors were never

on their game and Old G's ran out easy winners, closing the gap at the top of the division to just two points.

Medway's fate is still very much in their own hands because if they record a victory against Cranbrook at Priestfields next Saturday, it doesn't matter what any of the other sides do as they will be crowned champions.

If they fail to win and Old Gravesendians beat Gillingham Anchorians away, the title will go to the Old G's courtesy of a superior points difference.

In Rugby League, the Harlequins first team and their coaching staff were due to arrive at the Medway Dragons' home ground at The Garrison, to take part in a day's training with the club.

• To see how it went, log onto www.yourmedway.co.uk.

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